00103175

THE
ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BOMBAY
TOWN HALL, BOMBAY-1.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 20 February, 2016

TRAVELS

IN

KOORDISTAN, MESOPOTAMIA,

&c.

103175

INCLUDING

AN ACCOUNT OF PARTS OF THOSE COUNTRIES

HITHERTO UNVISITED BY EUROPEANS.

WITH

SKETCHES OF THE CHARACTER AND MANNERS

OF THE

KOORDISH AND ARAB TRIBES.

BY J. BAILLIE FRASER, ESQ.

AUTHOR OF

"THE KUZZILBASH," "A WINTER'S JOURNEY TO PERSIA," ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

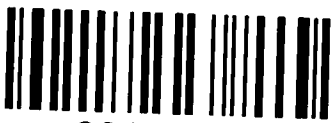
LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET,

Publisher in Ordinary to Her Majesty.

1840.

915.667.
Foa / Jra
103175.



LONDON:
PRINTED BY SAMUEL BENTLEY,
Bangor House, Shoe Lane.

CONTENTS

OF

THE FIRST VOLUME.

LETTER I.

Causes of protracted Stay.—Healthy Climate of Tabreez.—Its Environs and Aspect.—Gardens.—Fruits.—Yeilaks.—Prosperity.—Causes of.—Trade.—Mahomed Meerza—his Court.—Causes of its Dulness.—The Kaymookâm—his Character and Power.—Visit to his Excellency.—Changes in our social Circle.—Visit to the Prince Royal.—Summary Castigation. . Page 1

LETTER II.

Travelling Reflections and Preparations.—Dinner with the Kaymookâm.—Details of an Establishment for Guests.—Habits of a Minister of State.—Rocket Practice.—Leave Tabreez.—Deeza-Khaleel.—Tessouje. . . 27

LETTER III.

Selmâs.—Rûssian Policy.—Kara-kishlâc.—Sportive Damsels.—Kereemabâd.—Plain of Ooroomia.—Agricultural Improvement.—Enter the City.—Nejeff Koolee Khan.—Palace and handsome Apartment.—City of Ooroomia.—Fortified Houses.—Armenian Church.—Nestorian Christians—their Country.—Hakkaree Koords.—Other Tribes.—Meer of Rewandooz.—Journey of Dr.

Ross to that Chief.—Contrast between Turkish and Koordish Villages.—Dumdum.—Rewandooz.—Character of the People.—Dress.—Manners.—Blindness of the old Meer.—Brothers of the Meer.—Superstitions.—Inhospitality.—Fierceness and Bravery.—Laws and Justice of the Meer.—Summary Punishment.—Army in the Field.—Capture of Accra.—Submission of Amadia.—Dr. Ross goes to the Meer's Camp—his Appearance and Conversation—his Camp.—Dr. Ross returns to Baghdad.—Character of the Meer.—Speculations on the modes of proceeding. . Page 46

LETTER IV.

Leave Ooroomia.—Koordish Costume and Weapons.—Dusht-e-Beel.—Ugly Customers.—Koordish Mountains.—Plain of Ooshnoo.—Sumud Khan and his Establishment.—Antiquity of the Koords — compared with the highland Clans. — State of Country.—A Disappointment.—Ooshnoo.—Depopulation.—Buffaloes.—Koords on Horseback.—Fishing.—New Mode of Catching Quails.—Leave Ooshnoo.—Blood Feuds.—Suggerân Seyeds.—Negotiations for a safe Conduct.—Successful Fishing.—Koords at Prayer.—Kara Papâks and Bilbâs Koords.—Threatening Appearances.—Bustards.—A churlish Reception.—Retreat to a Caravanserai.—A hospitable Koord. — A Disappointment. — Piscatory Adventures. 84

LETTER V.

The Khan's Arrival—his Lineage.—Changed Condition of the Koords.—Over Taxation.—A Battle Royal, and a choice Morsel.—My Hosts.—Domestic Manners of the Koords—of the Great—of the Ladies.—Discrepancy of Reports.—Leave Souje Bulâgh.—Beirâm.—Obstinacy of Guards.—Hussun Aga.—Face of the Country. — Pass of Soonâs, and Descent. — Nistân. — Village evening Meal and Custom.—Aspect of the Mountains and Ride to Seradusht.—Abdool-Sumud Khan.—Dearth of Grain.—Magnificent Scenery.—Ascent of Hoomeel.—Ford the Aksu.—Akoorta.

— Bivouac. — Autumnal Tints. — Burying Grounds. — Nezer-Kerdehs.—Koordish Superstitions.—Plain of Suleimaniah.—Town. —Our Lodging. . . . . Page 110

LETTER VI.

Fate of Suleimaniah.—Condition of the Pashah.—His Conversation.—Fire-proof Seyeds.—The City.—Burying Grounds.—A Widow.—Take Leave of the Pashah.—Another Disappointment. —Sheherazoor.—The Serteep Khan.—A Koordish Guide.—Cross the Mountains.—Karadagh.—Jews.—Koords deficient in imaginative Superstition.—Explanation of Nezer Kerdehs.—Jaffs and Hamadawund Tribes.—Derbend of the Sugramah Pass.—A Glimpse of Assyria.—Zhallah.—A Dwarf.—*Mehmandâree.*—A stony Country.—A fine Oak.—Selim Aga.—Koordish Chiefs.—The Assyrian Empire.—Rustum Aga.—General Characteristics of the Koords.— Kufri.—Change of Manners as well as of People. . . 147

LETTER VII.

Karateppeh.—An Alarm.—Hamrine Hills.—Adinakewy and Joongeer Aga.—Arab Guides—and Camps.—Anxiety.—Traces of former Prosperity.—Hûp-hûp.—Desert Partridges.—Plain of Baghdad. — Unpleasant Intelligence. — Baghdad beleaguered. — Stoppage at the Gate.—Reach the Residency. . . 196

LETTER VIII.

Charms of Rest.—First Impressions of Baghdad.—Walls.— Streets.—Houses.—River and its Banks.—Bazaars and Markets. —Buckingham—Descriptive Extract from his Work.—Mosques and Minarets.—Private Houses.—Domestic Scenes and Manners. —Turkish Women.—Personal Appearance.—Custom of Tattooing the Skin.—Georgian Females—their Children difficult to rear.— Population of Baghdad.—Costume—in the Time of Daood Pashah. —Military.—Bazaars.—Cook Shops.—Apathy of Turkish Mer-

chants.—Arabs—their Costume.—Loud Speaking.—Noises of Baghdad. . . . . Page 210

LETTER IX.

Causes of the present ruin of Baghdad.—Plague appears in the City—its Progress.—The Resident quits Baghdad.—Mr. Groves declines accompanying him.—Progress of the Pestilence.—The Water breaks through the Wall and inundates the City.—Seven thousand Houses fall at once, fifteen thousand Persons buried.—The Pashah's Distress.—Caravans overtaken by the Flood.—Inundation abates, and also the Disease.—Mr. Groves's Family attacked—his Wife and Child carried off.—Instances of sweeping Mortality, and Causes thereof.—Effects of the Pestilence in other Places.—Baghdad after the Plague.—Two more Plagues in as many Years.—Mortality at Bussora. . . . 233

LETTER X.

Political Consequences of the Plague.—Displeasure of the Porte at Daood Pashah.—Capidjees and Firmauns.—Dânish Effendi—is murdered by the Pashah's Orders.—The Pashah's Terrors.—Allee appointed Pashah of Baghdad.—The City besieged.—The Pashah gives himself up.—The City treacherously delivered up.—Daood sent to Constantinople.—Measures pursued by Allee.—Murder of the Georgians—and of Saleh Beg.—Character of Allee Pashah's Government. 255

LETTER XI.

Appearance of the City within and without the Walls.—Politics of the Pashah.—The Jerboah Arabs—they invest the City—Retreat.—The Aneiza Arabs called in—dismissed by the Pashah—they refuse to retire—and invest the City.—Engagement between the Pashah's Troops and Allies with the Aneiza—the former defeated, and the Jerboah Sheikh slain.—All the neighbouring Population

driven within the Walls.—White Asses and Black Slaves.—Female Costumes and Apartments.—Jewels.—Occupations.—Visits.—Voices.—General Conduct and Character. Page 268

LETTER XII.

Visit to the Pashah—his Appearance.—Murderous Passages.—The Kiayah and his officers.—Clamour of Servants for Presents.—The Pashah's Credulity regarding the Transmutation of Metals.—An adroit Adept and successful Experiment.—Dervishes—their three Classes—the Collegiate—the Endemic—the Peripatetic.—Story of Maamoon-ul-Mustapha.—Visit to the invulnerable Dervishes—their Tricks and Impositions.—Visit to the Shrine of Sheikh Abdul Kâder.—The "Alsatia" of Baghdad.—The Nuqeeb—and Shrine.—The Roman Catholic Church and Vicar. 289

LETTER XIII.

The City invested by the Aneiza.—All Travellers plundered.—Turbulent State of the Shrines and Sanctuaries—Reasons thereof.—Excesses of the Yerrim-mâses.—Death of the Shah of Persia.—Roads consequently Unsafe.—Reports.—Quarrel with the Ageil.—History of the Ageil—their Settlement in Baghdad—required by the Pashah to quit it.—They refuse to move.—The Tribe musters.—The Bridge is cut and firing begins across the River.—Various Reports.—Continued fighting.—Application for the Resident's Boat—the Turks muster and man her—and thus draw a fire upon the Residency.—The Boat at length taken across.—The troops land.—A Rush made across the Bridge.—Uproar and Pillage—Night falls.—Rumours and Reports.—Plunder.—The Ageil quit the Town.—Loss of Troops—their Atrocities. 317

LETTER XIV.

Arrival of Sheikh Waddee and Solymaun Gunnum.—Visit to the scene of Combat.—Appearances.—Camp of the Zobeid Arabs.—

Appearance, Arms, &c.—Stealing Horses—and Consequences.—Camp of the Haitahs.—A Boaster.—News from Persia.—Three Kings of Brentford.—Reports from Tabreez.—The Aneiza decamp.—The Pashah's Arrangements.—Baghdad Police and Justice.—More Reports from Persia.—Sheikh Waddee.—Kauzemein.

Page 337

LETTER XV.

Arab Tribes of Mesopotamia.—Arab Character and Tastes.—Blood Feuds.—Arab Revenge.—The Vale of Women.—Extracts from the Journal of a Traveller.—Toorkomans of the Euphrates.—Ben-i-Saeed Arabs.—Hamet-ul-Khaleel.—The Women ugly.—Ul-Fadhee Arabs of Racca.—Loud Talkers.—Jungle Arabs.—Decamping and Encamping.—Difference between Jungle or Fellah, and Bedooeen Arabs.—The Golden Days of Plunder.—Power of the Sheikhs and their Families. . . . 354

TRAVELS

IN

KOORDISTAN AND MESOPOTAMIA.

LETTER I.

Causes of protracted stay at Tabreez.—Healthy climate of that place.—Its environs and aspect.—Gardens.—Fruit.—Yeilaks.—Prosperity.—Causes of.—Trade.—Mahomed Meerza.—His court.—Causes of its dulness.—The Kaymookâm.—His character and power.—Visit to the Prince Royal.—Summary castigation.

Tabreez, 4th October 1834.

DEAR ——,

I NEED scarcely apologize for the comparative length of time that has elapsed between the dates of my last and present letter, nor for the conciseness of the former communication. You well know the lassitude which succeeds any long sustained effort of body or mind; and, in my case, both were so jaded by the time I reached this place, that for many days I could do little but enjoy the repose which it afforded me, and the social comforts to

which the soul, like a long bent bow, flew back with double zest. I revelled in the full sense of liberty and security, and rejoiced in the kindness and hospitality of the many friends who were gathered here together. Our days now flow on in peace, undisturbed by many causes of excitement, although some such do occasionally occur—and, like the seaman fresh from a voyage of hardship and a dangerous shipwreck, I luxuriate in this quiet though passive enjoyment, and shrink a little from the approaching necessity of once more getting into action. My horses, poor brutes, I have no doubt do more than participate in these sedentary tastes, as they are, in fact, the great cause of so long an indulgence; for until they get into something like condition, their master cannot move. Nor are my servants, worn out with the Ghilânee fever, a bit more desirous to disturb the repose they enjoy, than the master they serve, or the beasts they tend.

Were I to select a spot the best calculated for this renovating process—for the recovery of health, or for its preservation,—I know not that I could hit upon any more suited to the purpose than Tabreez at this season, or, indeed, at any season, so far as I am aware. A brighter sky and purer air than those which the inhabitants of this town and its environs breathe and live under, can scarcely be found. To me it seems as if there truly was "health in the breeze" that blows around me. In fact, the occasional excess of this breeze is about the only drawback here to comfort, so far as atmospheric influence is concerned, for the temperature is delightful. The

sun would be hot during the middle part of the day, but that this breeze cools his ardours effectually; and we must forgive the clouds of dust which it raises, even though they blind and choke the unfortunates whom business forces to go out during the prevalence of the gale.

During the months of June, July, and August, the heat in the town itself is no doubt considerable; but September relieves the inhabitants in part, and October, at times, is actually cold. Both heat and cold are dry and wholesome, quite unlike the stifling alternations which render Tehran and its environs so unhealthy in summer; and the evenings and mornings are at all times heavenly. What skies! what pure, brilliant ether! It is a delight to escape from the confinement of the mud walls and dusty lanes of the city, even to the broken ground beyond them; but you have no need to linger in the most disgusting part of the environs of all oriental cities, the immediate vicinity of the walls, where pits and hollows, and irregularities of every sort, burying-grounds with their mouldering tombstones and yawning graves, ruined walls and heaps of rubbish, and carrion and abominations of all descriptions conspire to sicken the passenger, and where the hurrying to and fro of mules and asses, *yaboos*, horses, and camels, loaded and unloaded, with their rude riders and ruder drivers, obstruct and perplex the paths;—no, get through all this as fast as you can, and by the shortest way, taking all possible care that you fall into no hole, slip from no treacherous bridge into the watercourse below, nor get

lost in the labyrinth of broken enclosures into which you plunge, with intent to extricate yourself from some interminable string of camels or jackasses, loaded with weeds for fuel. If you succeed, you will probably find yourself on a fine hard open plain, where you may give your horse the rein, and permit his pent-up spirits, like your own, to have free scope, and expatiate in the mighty space around you. Then pause as you crown some gentle acclivity, and cast a backward glance on the busy scene you have quitted—on the thronged city—the abode of so much human passion and human woe—with its little sprinkling of happiness, like the seasoning of a tasteless or bitter dish.

And a fair and pleasant sight, with all its faults, you will confess Tabreez to be, as you gaze upon it from some little height to the eastward or north, just far enough removed to lose the sense of its mean mud-built houses, and the imperfections of its ill-kept walls, its old ark, and one or two minarets towering above the mingled mass of buildings and trees; for there are several gardens within the place, and a perfect forest of orchards envelope it on all sides, stretching far beyond its precincts into the plain. Then the well-known red hills, with the more distant peaks that tower above them, and the blue mountains that skirt Lake Shahee on the north, and the lofty crests of Sahund, still spotted with snow and gilt and empurpled by the rays of the setting sun, which also edges with flame a mass of low clouds resting on the distant lake; all this, mellowed and harmonized by the soft

mysterious haze of the hour, forms a panoramic picture which, though deficient in the rich luxuriant beauty peculiar to more western climes, possesses, I assure you, a sublimity and expansive grandeur of its own, which must strike with admiration every unprejudiced observer of nature.

The gardens of Tabreez are another pleasant and fertile resource for the indwellers of the city, for their collective extent is immense, and there are many of large size, to which access is easily obtained; and if one is fond of fruit he may indulge, for the merest trifle, to the fullest excess. Give the Bâghwân, or keeper of the garden, but a single *saheb kerân*—value one English shilling, and half a dozen of you may revel in the finest peaches, the juiciest nectarines, the most luscious grapes, pears that vie with if they do not surpass in flavour, the finest Jargonelle or Bon Chrétien, or Gloux-morceaux, or any other of the most celebrated kinds of Europe; as for melons of the richest sorts, they are a drug. Fruit in Tabreez, as generally throughout Persia, is, in fact, so plentiful and cheap, that it forms a great portion of the food of the common people, who eat it in quantities that would make any of us in less prolific countries stare: for instance, a Persian thinks nothing of eating two *mauns*—that is, fourteen pounds' weight of either common or watermelon—and scrape their skins clean too. Now, calculating the seeds and offal at a third, the remainder will be a pretty sufficient allowance for one individual. How their stomachs can contain and retain so monstrous a burthen of crude vegetable

matter, it is difficult to comprehend; but it is often not with impunity. The insulted and overtaxed organ frequently gets sulky, and refuses to perform its office, and the gormandizer is punished for his excess by a surfeit, which terminates in a severe fever. Excess in food, particularly in fruit, is, in truth, a chief cause of all the illness which prevails here—for even this favoured spot is far from being exempted from the common doom; people do get ill and die here, as in all other parts of this terrestrial globe, and perhaps there is no more pregnant cause of such afflictions than over indulgence in eating. In Persia, I am sure it is so; for though the Persians are generally temperate in their habits, they one and all are given to occasional excess, and prince and peasant suffer alike in this way from the most disgusting debauches. It is not many months since the King nearly made an end of himself, by persisting in devouring quantities of a particular favourite soup; and on my way from Khorasan, one of my guards, being furnished gratis—that is, at my expense,—with plenty of good cheer, ate, two nights running, a quantity of pillaw sufficient for five hearty men; the consequence was an illness, from which I doubt if he ever recovered. In like manner two of my own servants brought on a fever at Resht, by immoderate gluttony at a feast which they made with money I had given them. I could give many other instances within my own knowledge, but the detail would be disgusting.

To invalids a change of air is as essential as medicine, more so indeed, I should say, judging

from personal experience, even were it from a fine atmosphere to another intrinsically less good. The inhabitants of Tabreez are blessed with the means of such a salutary change, perhaps beyond most others, for its neighbourhood abounds in delightful mountain abodes, where assuredly the air is of an unrivalled freshness and purity. About seven fursucks, or twenty-five miles, southward, in the mountains of Sahûnd, there is a village called Leewân, which gives its name to a pleasant valley in which runs a fine clear mountain stream. Perhaps not the least recommendation of this retreat is the fine trout with which this stream is tolerably stored, and which afford both pleasant pastime and food to those who seek its banks; and hither do the English party often repair and pitch their tents in a climate as cool and bracing as that of the mountains of Scotland or of Wales. Then in another direction there is the *Chummun*, or natural pasture of Oojaun, where the royal camp was wont to be pitched, and where the brood mares of the prince are now kept; and there is Serâb, an elevated tract on the road to Ardebeel, with its fine trout stream; and the noble highland districts of Khalkhal and Miskeen, if you wish to go further a-field. In short, I look upon Tabreez to be the best situated, as it is in point of fact the first, of Persian cities; for though Ispahan undoubtedly covers infinitely more ground, the principal part of that ancient capital is a maze of ruins, amongst which the remaining population is thinly scattered, and there is about it an air of decay and fallen state which is exceedingly depressing. Ta-

breez, on the contrary, is a city which is every day improving, and its population increasing; there are few or no ruins in it, but you constantly see the streets blocked up with the materials for building or repairing houses, and there reigns in it an air of bustle and prosperity which, except in Tehran, you observe nowhere in Persia, and not even there, to the same extent.

Far be it from me to insinuate that this prosperity has its origin in any uncommon advantage derived from a better system of government; in that respect neither Tabreez in particular, nor Azerbijaun in general, has much cause for rejoicing beyond the rest of the country. Abbas Meerza did indeed make some progress in fixing the revenues of the province upon a systematic scale, and, while he resided here, in enforcing their collection, but assuredly the welfare or prosperity of the Ryots were but secondary objects of his consideration, and though, while he administered affairs in person, there might be less of arbitrary exaction, every village was taxed to the utmost it could well bear. Since the time he left the province, however, and devoted himself to the subjugation of Khorasan, his government of Azerbijaun, subjected to the tyranny of his brothers, who were left in charge, had, Heaven knows, little to congratulate itself on, nor had either citizens or villagers much cause to rejoice in the tender mercies of these princes.

No, Tabreez owes its comparative prosperity to that great engine of civilization, improvement, and enrichment, commerce. It is the greatest

trading mart in Persia. It is the *entrepôt* where meet the roads from Teflis and from Asia Minor, from east, west, north, and south, whence caravans arrive to pour the wealth of all nations into its lap. From Teflis and from Resht comes all the Russian produce which the western and southern provinces of Persia consume, together with the little foreign trade which the late absurd prohibitory tariff of Russia has left to her Georgian capital. From Erzeroom is poured in the vast and increasing stream of European manufactures—chiefly English goods, which flows to the lately opened port of Trebizond, or arrives by the more tedious land routes through Asia Minor from Constantinople; while, by the avenues and commercial channels of Persia itself, arrive the valuable productions of India, Tartary, Arabia, &c. to fill its bazaars.

Where custom-house regulations are so lax, and bribery and corruption so universal, it would be no easy matter to calculate the amount of trade which this capital enjoys; but I have little doubt, from what I could collect, that its European trade, including of course that with Russia, approaches a million sterling,* and that this is at least equalled by its Asiatic and internal commerce; and though the Dons of London, and Liverpool, and Glasgow, and Bristol, may turn up their noses at so petty a concern, let me tell them that it is a very fair amount for a country so poor and ruined as Persia, and a very pretty commencement to a traffic which,

* There are now good grounds for knowing that it exceeds this, and is annually increasing.

so far as Great Britain is concerned, is yet in its infancy.

I fear I must have wearied you with this "descant" on Tabreez, but I have done—you need fear no elaborate account of its public buildings, for it has none worth describing. The old *ark* or citadel, perhaps the work of Caliph Haroon-ul-Rasheed, frowns in ruins over the modern city, and the remains of an ancient mosque or two are all that are seen besides from the top of its battlements, which command a most extensive view. Perhaps one of the most valuable attractions of Tabreez is, its comparatively close vicinity to Europe, and the facility it affords of getting rapidly out of "the land of Paynimrie" into Christian countries; for a run of four hundred miles, to Teflis, places you in European society and manners; a journey but little longer will carry you to Trebizond, from whence a snug vessel may waft you either to Constantinople or to England; and if you affect the speed and comforts of a Tatar trip, the road by Erzeroom through Asia Minor is open, and you may reach the fairest city of Islam at a reasonable expense of time, money, and bodily fatigue. To me, I confess, that these facilities were no trifling recommendation, as I hope in no long time to profit by them, on my return to England. England! home! what a thrill do these two little words produce in every vein! what a sudden impulse do they give the blood whenever I think on them! Let the man who growls at the fancied evils and petty annoyances that meet him there, and to which, like every child of Adam, he is

heir, uproot himself from his native soil, quit the comforts of his home, and roam about for a while in lands like these, and if he does not learn to hate his wayward petulance, and long enthusiastically for a restoration to the blessings he has so culpably undervalued, he deserves to be doomed to perpetual wandering and banishment.

You may wonder, perhaps, that in all this effusion about Tabreez, I have omitted saying a word about the young prince whose residence it is—the heir apparent of Persia, and his court. The fact is, that at this moment there is little to be said upon the subject. Almost ever since I came here, Mahomed Meerza has been confined with a fit of the gout, and the army is absent on the frontiers of Turkey, and with it most of the officers who would have given glitter and bustle to the court. "Gout!" you will exclaim,—"a prince of Persia in the gout? what an absurd idea,—what an incongruity!" and so it is, I grant; for with a prince of Persia, or any Persian, one is apt to associate notions of slenderness and activity, gracefulness and capital horsemanship. The idea of a fat body and swollen legs, seems absolutely foreign to the creature. But Mahomed Meerza, although only twenty-eight years of age, is actually a very corpulent young man, and has, from his mother's family, a hereditary taint of gout, which has unhappily been early excited into action by the unlimited indulgence of an excellent appetite, for the most difficult task of his royal highness's medical advisers, is to induce him to be temperate in eating. Business, too, prevents him,

while living in cities, from taking that extent of exercise which his natural disposition to fulness requires, and thus he is reminded of his excesses, and punished for them, by an occasional sharp fit of gout.

But there are other causes which tend to curtail the brilliancy of the prince's court, and of these poverty is one. He has returned from the Khorasan campaigns to an empty treasury, and to find the resources of the province, from whence it should be replenished, exhausted and forestalled by the atrocious peculations of his brothers, and certain other individuals in whom his father had placed confidence. Of the former, two, namely, Jehangeer Meerzà, and Khosroo Meerza, have been sent to well-merited confinement in the fortress of Ardebeel. These young men are both so worthless that their own mother declared it impossible to tell which was the worst.

There is a yet more curious reason for the quietness of his court. The whole real power in Azerbijaun is at this moment vested in the person of the prince's prime minister, Meerza Abool Caussim, to whom I have already introduced you under the title of Kaymookâm, and with whom you may remember I had an interview at Muzeenoon. This minister, as he is one of the most prominent, is also one of the strangest characters in all Persia, nor are his manners and appearance less remarkable than his mental qualities. Conceive a man of somewhat more than middle size, exceedingly heavy and corpulent, with much rotundity of paunch, coarse fea-

tures, small but very prominent eyes, so short-sighted as to suggest the idea of purblindness, yet keen and bright withal; a great ugly mouth garnished with long, irregular, prominent, yellow fangs, which an hideous habitual and stupid gape always exposes to view—conceive all these, and you will say that they do not compose a very promising exterior; and certainly the external attributes of the Kaymookâm would be more suitable to a stupid village boor, than to the first statesman of an empire. It is true that a good-humoured yet somewhat sarcastic smile at times brightens up the lower part of his countenance, while the upper features are illumined by a quick glance from his glimmering optics; but to my apprehension, there is unquestionably nothing in the outward appearance of the Kaymookâm to herald the talent and shrewdness which it is asserted he possesses.

Nor are his demeanour and personal habits calculated to impress strangers, Europeans at least, with more favourable ideas of his character and endowments. He can be civil and even polite when it suits his purpose, but he can be quite as impertinent and gross; and it requires a strong and steady hand to restrain him, when his devil tempts him to be insolent or abusive. Like many of the Persian great, he is a monstrously foul feeder, and his feats in devouring melons and cucumbers, as commonly related, seem utterly incredible. I have heard, for instance, of his gobbling up seven mauns, or fifty pounds of melons at a sitting, and it is certain that he indulges in this way to such an excess,

as to be for a time incapable of moving. A gentleman once, in passing over the ground where his excellency had been encamped with a military force, towards the Turkish border, observed a temporary tent formed of some spears stuck in the ground and covered with a few horse-cloths and great coats. On riding up to see who could be there, he discovered that it was the minister, who, having gorged so much of a favourite sort of melon that he could not move, had been placed by his attendants under this temporary shelter, erected for the purpose, until his excellency should be able to proceed.

As a man of business he stands unequalled in public estimation for universal talent. He is an able financier; understands, and it is asserted can regulate and command, the resources of the country —is well acquainted with the condition of every province; and none, they say, comes near him in knowledge of foreign relations and management of foreign policy. But that for which he is most celebrated—I had almost said notorious,—is the art of political intrigue, so much admired by Persians, and, more shame to the age, not less encouraged in civilized Europe; the art, in other words, of cheating others—of making them believe what the intriguer desires, however wide of the truth, to serve his own purposes—of deceiving and lying through thick and thin to compass the ends he has in view.

No one who knows the Kaymookâm expects a word of truth from him, and thus it happens, that even when the honest gentleman may find it his interest to stick to facts, he seldom meets with credit. Yet

it is strange how easily so well-known a deceiver does manage to create the impression he desires to make—men are so easily gulled with fair words. It is a principle with the Kaymookâm never to deny any one a request, so that he contrives to send petitioners from his presence soothed and contented, if not confident; for if you ask these very persons how they came to give credit to his fair words, they will reply, "We do not believe them, we don't give credit to a word he has said," and yet they leave him obviously pleased and elevated with this gaseous food.

That so systematic a deceiver should expect deception on the part of others is but natural, and, accordingly, we find the Kaymookâm to be the most suspicious of mortals. He can confide in no one, and consequently is forced to perform, or at least to undertake, all manner of business himself, both in gross and in detail. In affairs of political consequence, he will admit of no participation or assistance; for instance, not a soul has been privy to what has passed in the course of certain important negotiations which he has been carrying on of late with the minister of Russia; he receives, reads, and answers all letters connected with them himself. The consequence of this absurd monopoly is obvious; nine-tenths of all that should be done is left unaccomplished, and that which is done, in spite of his great talents as a writer, is imperfectly executed. Of all his qualifications, whether natural or acquired, there is none, next perhaps to his talents as a statesman,—that is, political intriguer,—on

which he values himself more than his skill at the pen, both in expression and in handwriting—a great object of ambition to learned Persians. He considers himself the first scribe of his day, and freely boasts of it: he confesses himself a personal coward. "I *am* a coward, I admit it," he is wont to say; "I hate your swords and guns, and fighting; but show me the man who will match me at the pen: I will fight him at that as long as he pleases;" and, it is true, the minister is by constitution, physically and politically, a coward—never was so timid a mortal, though at the pen he is as bold as a lion. He is, moreover, naturally indolent—it is only necessity that stimulates him to activity. Thus, when he has contrived to bustle through one affair, he is so delighted with the breathing-time it gives him, that the application of some powerful impulse is required to set him to work again. The increasing press of business sometimes overwhelms him so that he flies to his *underoon,* or to his bath, for refuge, and there endeavours to keep the enemy at bay till he can dispose of the most urgent matters. But even there the roar of neglected suitors will penetrate, and he suddenly escapes to a distant village to avoid his persecutors: in vain, they are at his heels; he dashes off to another—there is no rest; his own people are constrained to join the hue and cry, and, wearied out and in despair, he at length returns to his own quarters, and abandons himself to the badgering, which can no longer be shunned.

The consequences of this miserable system are

frightful, injustice of all sorts to a terrible extent prevails, and such an outcry is raised against himself and his master, that I cannot imagine that the thing can long go on. With regard to the court, the state of which gave rise to this essay on the Kaymookâm's character, the effect produced is remarkable; for the Prince is placed by his minister in a complete state of surveillance. No one can approach his person without permission of the Kaymookâm; and few like to rouse a jealousy that may be fatal to themselves by evincing any desire to be much near the person of their sovereign. Hence that sovereign is almost deserted, and little of state or pomp appears either in or about the palace.

On my arrival at Tabreez, it was judged proper and respectful to announce my return from Khorassan, and my disposition to wait upon his Excellency so soon as he might have leisure to receive me. The reply was, that he had a great deal to say to me, and would see me as soon as he could find a moment disengaged. That moment, however, not having been announced in the course of the ensuing week, I sent to his Excellency some papers, which it had been my intention to deliver personally, with a message expressive of my regret that I should probably have to leave the country without an opportunity of paying him my respects. This produced two appointments running, both of which failed. A third led me to his house one morning about seven o'clock.

The servants told me that their master was in

the bath. "Oh, very well," replied I, "then I'm off. I can't wait here two hours on the mere chance of seeing your master." But they entreated me to stay, as their master would never forgive them if they permitted me to go, &c. and promised that I should not have to wait above half an hour. So I followed them into a poor small apartment, having a table, with six or eight English chairs ranged around it. I had taken the precaution of bringing some business to occupy me in case of detention, and after being thus employed for half an hour, a servant brought me a caleeoon. I asked him when his master was coming. "In about an hour he will come out of the bath," replied he. "Then I will wait no longer," said I, and rose to go. "No, no, no," exclaimed he, earnestly, "don't go; the Kaymookâm will be here in a few minutes;" so again I sat down, and in about fifteen minutes, the bustle of servants and shuffling of slippers announced the great man's approach.

In the mean time, however, the court before the windows had become full of people of all sorts and degrees, Khans, Begs, Moollahs, Meerzas, merchants, soldiers, peasants, messengers going, and messengers returning, &c. all of whom had some petition to present, or some request to prefer, and to all of whom, with exemplary patience, did his Excellency address some compliment or word of salutation, while, with a patience no less praiseworthy, did I stand at the window watching the progress of this comet with the great tail. At length, his eye fell on me, and incontinently did there issue

from his mouth a whole volley of compliments and inquiries in the Persian fashion, with many assurances that "my place had long been empty;" that "I had brought light to his eyes," and that "he had a thousand things to say to me." He then entered the room, scattering compliments like flowers on all sides, took a chair, ordering another to be placed near his own for me—made all the world sit down; turned to me, and, taking a roll of paper from a secretary, began instantly to write upon it fast, fast, leaving me with my mouth half agape to catch the expected communication, and prepare for my reply.

This farce was continued for a considerable time, when up started a fellow at the bottom of the room with a long story about some money he had been sent to collect, but which he swore a dozen men and more along with him, would not be able to wrest from the people. His clamour or energy, to give it no stronger name, aroused the minister's attention; up went the eye from the paper as if awakened from a dream, and began to blink at the man; but he instantly entered on the business, heard the statement, and directed what was to be done with infinite minuteness. The spell thus broken, papers and notes without number were thrust into the hands of two attendants, who passed them with ludicrous rapidity into the great man's hand. He took them mechanically, as it seemed, and began to read them. His manner of performing this operation is most curious. From extreme short-sightedness, he cannot distinguish a letter unless

the writing be within an inch of his eye; so he draws the paper backwards and forwards, or up and down the range of that organ, touching his very nose; but as his sight, when the object is within proper range, is extremely quick, the sense of a piece of writing is gathered with a celerity that seems like intuition; and the mechanical part of the business is performed so rapidly, that one would swear he was gravely rubbing his nose with a piece of paper, instead of reading a letter.

Such was his occupation for a good half hour, attending to no one except those who came into the room, when, being informed by an attendant of their name and rank, he always politely requested them to be seated. As for me, I sat patiently and much amused, watching the scene, until an Italian physician, with whom I had some acquaintance, came in, and, observing how his Excellency was occupied, gave me a smile, and asking, as much as to say, "Ah, if this is the case, no hope for us." Of this I had become convinced, and availed myself of the little bustle his entrance had occasioned to ask my leave, observing that his Excellency had obviously *now* no leisure to listen to my communications. But "No, no, no!" exclaimed his Excellency; rapidly, "not at all—you must not go: I have a great deal to say; and, see, I am quite ready." So he drew my chair closer, jerking his own, at the same time, nearer to mine, and there we sat, poking our heads at each other in the most confidential-looking attitude, till they almost touched. But the fates were adverse; scarcely had his proe-

mium commenced, when a fresh handful of the vile little notes were again thrust forward. His Excellency rejected them. "Don't you see that I am engaged with the Saheb?" said he to the secretary, in a voice of remonstrance and entreaty, rather than of anger. The secretary smiled, and withdrew the notes. "And what am *I* to do then, your Excellency?" roared out some Gholaum or Beg, who, with shulwars on, and all his riding geer, was standing at the bottom of the room waiting to be despatched; "here am I delayed all this time." The look which this appeal attracted to the speaker was almost instantly diverted to another person, evidently the messenger of some great man, who, in more respectful guise, yet also at the top of his voice demanded, "And what reply to the Khan's letter, my lord? He fully expects an immediate answer."—"And let me represent to your Excellency," said an attendant in a low voice, "that *this* petition requires instant attention." The poor Kaymookâm looked infinitely distressed, fidgeted on his chair, gazed vacantly first at the note, then at the attendant, as if to see whether he could still evade his fate; then, like the fascinated animal which reluctantly but helplessly throws itself into the snake's jaws, seized the paper, and skimmed its contents. It was but the signal for a general and overpowering attack. Ere a reply had been given to the first, a dozen of other papers were thrust forth, and mechanically grasped as before. His Excellency cast at me a deprecatory look, to which I replied with a bow, dissolving at the same

time the close union of our chairs. The battle was plainly lost.

"The horses are ready, your Excellency, and the road is long; the sun is getting hot," said an attendant accoutred for riding, who now appeared at the door, and who doubtless had been from the first ordered to come thus to the rescue. It was the signal for breaking up. "I am really very sorry, Saheb Fraser," said his Excellency to me,—"I am quite ashamed on your account; but forgive me that I am forced to go — there are some of the Princes, &c. waiting for me. I am greatly ashamed; but, *inchallah*, on my return I have much to say and to hear." I uttered a few *astafferullahs!* and *inchallähs!* in their proper places, in reply to these self-condemnatory and civil expressions of the great man, and made my bow with a "May your favour never diminish!"—"*Khodah humraee shumah! Khodah nigahdârit!*"—May God be with you! may he watch over you!" responded he, and we separated, and thus terminated this strange interview. It was no disappointment to me, for I had nothing to ask nor expect — I had to give and not receive information; in fact, as to worming information out of the Kaymookâm, no one ever dreams of it; if he did, he would be like him that went to gather wool, but came back shorn — he would surely be well pumped himself.

But such is exactly his conduct with others on occasions of still more importance, however pressing may be the business. Even when he can be induced to make a *khelwut*, or private audience, for

a special purpose, his eunuchs, privileged persons, constantly bring in vile little notes, which he as constantly reads, at times pulling out his pen-case and answering them, to the total interruption of the business on hand. To such an extent does this go, that I have known the gentlemen of our mission forced to break up their appointed interviews, when thus interrupted, in order to testify their sense of the impropriety of such conduct when practised towards them: such is the stuff of which ministers are sometimes made in Persia; thus are her affairs now managed and her hopes of improvement crushed —and thus is it like to continue, unless some powerful influence be exerted to put her affairs to rights.

I have not yet mentioned that our party of Europeans has been greatly reduced of late, by the departure of the greater part of our detachment of officers for the Persian camp, which, as I have said, is now on the Turkish frontier, in order to bring to a settlement, by a demonstration of force, certain disputes connected with the respective claims of each country, on certain tribes of Koordish Eeliauts —wanderers in more senses than one, for, living on the border, upon any cause of dissatisfaction, real or imaginary, from either government, off they go across the frontiers into the territories of the neighbouring state, and set at nought the claims of that in which they may previously have been living.

While these gentlemen were with us, our British party was strong, mustering, with sergeants and all, about forty persons; and what with sporting parties and dinner parties, we made it out very pleasantly.

But we are now shorn of our beams, and, as is often the case, in such communities, where all men have some specific duty to attend to, a general break up is in the course of occurrence. Thus Macneill has left us at a moment's warning. The commandant of the detachment next, and four of his officers are sent to camp; then unfortunate *I* am just about to get another kick, which will set me a-spinning like a tee-totum for several months, and so it fares—fresh faces come and go—"come like shadows, so depart!"

Macneill's departure was to me a painful affair, for with him I lost the aid and counsel of my best friend; circumstances rendered it necessary that a most confidential person should, at this time, proceed to England with all speed; and, accordingly, to the no small surprise of the British residents here, from whom, as well as from others, the measure had, for sufficient reasons, been kept secret, that gentleman's place was one fine morning, in Persian phrase, "found empty." At early dawn I called on him, and found him cramming his baggage into Tatars' bags. In two hours I shook hands with him—saw him mounted on one of my dear old friends, the *chupper* horses—and off he went, followed by the good wishes of all the party, when they knew of his intended journey. It was one of those rapid movements which takes us by surprise—one of those sudden events which sometimes change the face of the most monotonous societies, and rouse those within its circle of operation, only to plunge them into deeper dulness than before; nor were matters improved by the desertions that followed.

A few days ago I accompanied the envoy to visit the Prince—the heir apparent of the kingdom. He received us in a rather handsome apartment, plainly dressed, and sitting upon a chair, of which four others were placed for our party. He was perfectly gracious, and apparently desirous to make himself agreeable to us all; but such visits are always stiff, and the thick and rapid enunciation of his Royal Highness renders it very difficult for a stranger to follow what he says. His countenance is handsome and gracious, but his person, even already, is so fat that he promises to become a monster of corpulence. His disposition, though inclined to indolence, is amiable; but like many such tempers, when roused becomes as violent and determined as it had previously been mild or irresolute. An instance of this occurred the other day, when, on occasion of a scarcity of bread, some Moollah, who had made himself very busy, came into the Prince's presence, and forgot himself so far as to speak with disrespect, and even with rudeness. The Prince bore it for some time, but at length, roused to anger, started up and ordered his attendants to take and strangle the man instantly; a sentence which was executed on the spot. A similar doom was nearly inflicted upon a man of some rank, only the other day. He was a chief of Karadagh, who had been rather addicted to taking liberties with other men's necks, and plundering and pillaging a little on his own account. I do not recollect the precise exciting cause, but he had been endeavouring to excuse his own deeds to the Prince, in a manner which appears to have produced an

effect directly opposite to that intended; for his Royal Highness, getting into a fury, ordered the Furoshes to tie a rope about the chief's own neck, and drag him for a while about the yard. This operation was performed till the man became insensible, when one of the officers in presence, unbuckling his sword, placed it in the hands of the executioners, as a pledge of reward, provided he would desist till his Royal Highness should be entreated to pardon the culprit. The pardon was granted at the officer's request, but the culprit's recovery from the rude treatment he had undergone was long doubtful.

I must close this rambling epistle, as there is a messenger which may possibly catch Macneill, and I must now set about preparing for my journey to Baghdad, in right earnest. Adieu!

LETTER II.

Travelling reflections and preparations.—Dinner with the Kaymookâm.—Details of a guest establishment.—Habits of a Minisnister of State.—Rocket practice.—Leave Tabreez.—Deeza-Khaleel.—Tessouje.

12th October, Tessouje, a village on the Lake Shahee.

DEAR ——,

I REPLIED in a very hurried manner to your letters of —— . . . . They found me, as I told you, in the bustle of departure, and somewhat depressed at the prospect of quitting my good friends here to commence another long and toilsome journey. I am one of those who think a good thing is all the better of being enjoyed in company with a friend. "What a fine thing," exclaims some French author, "is solitude! if we had but some-one with us, to whom we might say, 'how beautiful is solitude!'" and so in my opinion is it with travelling. Without a companion to interchange ideas with, to whom we can communicate our ideas with hope of sympathy, the finest country and the grandest scenery at length cease to interest. And when, in addition to the want of such companion, there exist causes of care and anxiety, travelling, like solitude, becomes but a sorry amusement.

I know that such a confession will be hooted at

by the young and ardent, whose fiery zeal bids defiance alike to the chill of doubt, and the depressing influence of anxiety and loneliness; and the day has been when to roam about, almost at will, over countries wild and wide, with just enough of hazard and uncertainty to correct the tameness of perfect security, and with the chance, if not the certainty, of almost daily adventures, would have been ecstacy! the very height of romantic delight;—

> "Bound where thou wilt, my barb; or speed my prow;
> Be but the star that guides my wanderings;—"

love of adventure, if you will—danger for danger's-sake. But the sad realties of life have a good deal tempered this quixotic spirit. The hand of time, in passing over the mind, sobers the imagination as it whitens the hair. In speculation, it is true, these pictures of the fancy still wear a fascinating hue, as the most rugged mountains, seen from a distance, display the most bewitching effects—as reading of dangers and adventures charms the happy inmates of the comfortable drawing-room round their blazing fire. But let the rapt admirer of the picturesque ascend these same mountains of purple and gold, and his gay visions will vanish; let the fire-side traveller leave his slippers on the hearth, put on his boots and cloak, and mounting his horse, ride alone for days and nights in snow, and rain, and sun; resting, when he does rest, in stables and huts, or taking his brief nap with the sky alone for his covering, and I will engage, be he young and ardent as he may, his romance will not last six months.

It was with something of these feelings, still

chafed and raw from my disagreeable campaign in Mazunderan and Ghilân, and not improved by the near approach of another rough journey with men and cattle but half recovered from their late hard service, that I replied to your letters, in a tone, I fear, not the most cheerful or grateful for their contents . . . . But all these things are past, and here I am, having fairly quitted Tabreez, seated in a queer but not uncomfortable room in this fine village. We have not, however, quite done with that city, and I think, at the hazard of worrying you, I must give you another touch of the Kaymookâm, and tell you of a dinner-party to which he did me the honour to invite me. I hope you are not yet quite weary of this personage, for the scene was so characteristic, that I cannot refrain from bestowing upon you whatever tediousness it may possess.

Being given to understand that it was his Excellency's intention to make sure of an interview, and provide against the frequent interruptions which had hitherto taken place, by giving me a dinner in private some evening before I left the city, I deferred my departure for a day after all had been arranged, and at the time appointed, which was half an hour after sunset, rode to the minister's house. I was shown into the same room as before, which was lighted up with wax tapers; for I found that his Excellency is as sensitive to the gross smell of mutton fat, as any fine lady in England, and can detect an expiring candle or other vile greasy smell, at any distance, as well as Sister ——. These torches were lighted on my entrance, and in no long time after-

wards his Excellency made his appearance with his usual cordial and familiar greeting. In a minute or two we were both seated, and as he informed me that the present *private* meeting (*khelwut*) had been contrived as amends for former failures, one might have imagined the time had come for commencing, without loss of time, the inquiries I knew he had to make. But such was far from being the case.

No sooner had he seated himself and dismissed his attendants, including two very pretty boys, a son and grandson of his own, and given particular orders that he should not be interrupted, than, fixing his chin upon a gold-headed cane, which he held in both hands, and poking out his feet far from below his petticoats, he addressed the only man remaining, his *Názir*, or steward, and told him to go to certain of his guests whom he named, and bid them a thousand welcomes, and make as many apologies on his part, for not having yet been able to wait on them himself. "Tell them," said he, "that for the last three days one or other of the Princes have always been with me in the evening, and to-night I am occupied with this Feringee Saheb; but see that they are well attended to; be sure they have all they want."

"And who have I at present in the house?" continued he, inquiring of his servant; "what guests have I?—who have come to-day?" The Názir replied by reciting a long string of names which would in no wise edify you to hear, but to which his master listened attentively; "and where is such a one

lodged?" demanded he; and the question being also replied to, he went through the whole number, remarking on the propriety of the location of each respectively, and desiring that this Khan should have such a suite of rooms, and this Beg such an *outagh*, or chamber, and another such a *dellân*, or *balakhaneh;* and the tone in which the matter was discussed, showed that it was a subject of customary inquiry.

Nor were the other wants of these numerous guests less a matter of solicitude and arrangement. One person, for instance, had been regularly furnished with food for himself and his servants, but provision for his horses had not been made: the minister desired the omission to be rectified. Another had his own cook, to whom the requisite articles were to be furnished for his master's use, and who was to prepare them in a place specially pointed out by his Excellency. Another had been regularly supplied with two *dowrees*, or trays of victuals from the minister's own kitchen; but no breakfast had hitherto been sent, and that was to be rectified. "And what sherbet do you send with so-and-so's dinner; is it sweet or sour?" The Nâzir replied, but not, it seems, satisfactorily, for the minister directed that henceforth the sweet sherbet should have souring, either lemon-juice or *âbcooreh* (juice of sour grapes); "and let his breakfast consist of one bowl of *yekhnee* (soup), one stew, and a dish of pillaw, with fruit and sweatmeats: do you hear? And add another dish of pillaw to —— Khan's dinner. Where did you say he lodged?"—"In such a *ba-*

lakhaneh," replied the Nâzir. "That won't do," said his Excellency; "he must be accommodated in the little suite near the great *sherbet khaneh*."—"But so and so of your Highness's family have these rooms," said the Nâzir. "That is no matter," replied his master, "let the Khan be put there; we must find room for my people elsewhere: our guests must be made comfortable, at all rates. What has he for dinner, did you say?" The Nâzir mentioned the dishes. "That won't do neither," said the minister; "you must get lamb pillaw for him."—"There is no lamb to be had," said the Nâzir. "What! none?"—"None, sir, but a few pet-lambs, which sell at an enormous price."—"Never mind the price, man; he must have lamb, I tell you: and so-and-so must have chickens."—"Chickens are scarce, too," said the steward; "I have only got seven for your Highness's self, from the village, and three of them are too lean to be sent up."—"Then send the fat ones to the Khan, and keep the lean ones for me. Where have you put —— Khan, who came the day before yesterday?"—"As yet, sir, he sleeps on the roof of the house, but as the nights get cool, we shall lay his mattress on the room below."—"What bed-clothes have you given him?"—"A mattress, with two down pillows and a fine chintz *lahoff*, (coverlit)."—"That's right: and his people? Allee Beg—where does he sleep?"—"They all sleep out, I don't know where."—"Why, has the Beg a wife here?"—"No, sir, but there are so many—five or six of them, and I thought it would hardly do for them to sleep all together

in one small room, so I let them find lodgings without."

In this fashion did this singular Minister of State run on for the best part of an hour, discussing circumstantially all the details necessary for the entertainment of a multitude of guests, even to the minutest trifles, ordering for each the fare, lodging, and attendance, suited to his rank; for one, sherbets and dishes of superior delicacy; for another, ordinary victuals; for some, the rice of Ooroomia; for others, that of Miskeen; while the delicate *Amberboo*, or amber-scented rice of Mazunderan, was reserved for the most highly honoured. The same attention was bestowed on the furniture of their apartments, which were to be laid with carpets of Herât, or Maragha, or Mishkabad, according to the rank and circumstances of the tenants, nor was any expense to be spared.

There can be no doubt of the absurdity of a Minister of State occupying his precious time in such petty details; yet in themselves they are more important than you might at first imagine, for, in Persia, the manner of lodging and furnishing guests is as much a matter of etiquette as the arrangement of visits or seats in an assembly: each must be treated according to his rank, and the dishes, and sherbets, and carpets, &c. are carefully graduated accordingly. Were such not the case, umbrage and discontent would be the consequence; and the Kaymookâm told an English gentleman who, like me, heard him at this work, that every man in Persia who entertains many guests as he does, is

forced to do the same. On that occasion the Kaymookâm inquired how many were to dine with him that day? "Six," replied the Nâzir, repeating the names. His Excellency discussed the claims of each individual separately, and it appeared that, according to strict etiquette, only two of the whole could meet each other at his table, so the rest were put off till another day.

To me the whole affair sounded very much like ostentation; but that the minister has an immense establishment for guests and always well filled, is certain. His house is a sort of general rendezvous for all strangers of a certain rank, and his *mehman-khaneh*, (establishment for guests) is on a scale to correspond with such resort. I have heard it said that no less than fifty-eight Khans and their suites were his guests some time ago, upon no extraordinary occasion. All this, of course, entails an enormous outlay, and the expenses of his *mehman-khaneh* alone, are stated at 45,000 tomâns a year, or 22,500*l.* sterling. As one item, I was informed he had two hundred and eighty sets of spare bed-clothes for guests, together with carpets and *furshes* (numuds and mattresses) in proportion. Whether the Prince allows him anything in aid towards this immense expenditure I know not, but the outlay is all in cash, or what is equivalent, namely, corn and straw, sheep, butter, rice, &c. the produce of his villages.

At length these weighty matters were dismissed, and the Kaymookâm, dismounting from his chair, but telling me to keep mine, squatted himself down

upon the carpet, and pulling out his pencase and several large rolls of paper, took up his usual strong position for writing, by throwing himself forward on his breast, and wrote several notes. Next came the examination of a whole bundle of letters, and then, after the lapse of nearly two hours from my first arrival, he turned to me, and told me he had long wished to speak to me in private, though from his numerous engagements, he had not hitherto been able; but that now there were several things regarding which he expected information, and that I must tell him the truth, and the whole truth.

Then came a long string of questions, for which I was quite prepared, though I was scarcely so for the positive manner in which he insisted upon having, and clearly desired to have, the full and real state of each case. His questions related chiefly to the state of the provinces of Khorasan, and my opinions concerning that, and the conduct of the persons left in charge there by him; and as this was a theme on which I had little agreeable to say, I should have been better pleased to remain silent. But this would not do with the Kaymookâm. He saw my embarrassment, and frequently said, "Now, Fraser Saheb, I want the *truth;* remember, from you I expect it, and have no scruple in coming out with the whole of it." Thus conjured, I had nothing left but to give my true sentiments, clothed in language as inoffensive as I could find. The task was a painful one, but my duty was clear, and as there was a hope of some good result, I resolved to perform it at all hazard or sacrifice.

Our conversation was long; frequently the minister would retire, as it were, into himself, and continue absorbed in thought for many minutes. But after a good while, the Adjutant-General of the army came in, and with him he began discussing the clothing of certain regiments, and entered into the most minute conceivable detail of the fabrication of a serbâz's coat—how much cloth it would require—how many quarters and half quarters, more or less, would be wanted for a vest of some new pattern; whether *châroks*, or laced brogues, or boots, or Russian shoes, would be cheapest and best for the soldier in a winter's campaign, and a thousand similar particulars, into which he went with the greatest possible seeming gravity and interest. I could not help suspecting that these details were entered into, before me, in order to impress me with a high notion of his Excellency's care for the comfort of the troops.

All this time, too, his Excellency was roaring out for dinner, which seemed to have been adjourned "*sine die.*" Interruptions too, began to increase. As a besieged fortress that has long withstood the assault of its foes at length begins to yield, or as a battered and long wave-tossed vessel gives way and admits the water by a thousand chinks—or, take any other simile you like better, provided it be sufficiently hackneyed—so did the doors of the Kaymookâm's *khelwut* at length give way to the crowd which, even at this hour of the night, besieged them, and in rushed a crowd of Meerzas, or secre-

taries and writers, with their girdles almost bursting with enormous bundles of papers. The minister cast a desponding glance at the irrepressible inroad, and began mechanically to take and read, in his strange way, whatever was set before him; some received their orders and were bundled off, and others were told to reserve their budgets till a later hour. But there was one cool, determined fellow, who roundly taxed the great man with having mislaid a paper of consequence, on account of the absence of which Meerza such-a-one was ready to go distracted. In vain did his Excellency deny all knowledge of the document; his accuser respectfully but pertinaciously stuck to the charge—was it not in his Excellency's pockets? or might it not have been left in his cast-off clothes of that day? "No, no, I tell you no!" declared his Excellency, impatiently; "I have none of it—I know nothing of it—I am as wild about it as Meerza such-a-one can be;" and then, as if in bravado, he commenced in an angry, huffy manner, to jerk out the contents of certain receptacles termed pockets, which, for dimensions, would have beaten those of good old C——, and out came a mass of letters and papers that would have covered an acre of ground—they would have set up a petty grocer or snuff-seller for ever—when, behold! to his Excellency's infinite discomfiture, last of all, just as if it had stuck there on purpose, like Hope in Pandora's box, out came the very paper that had caused all the rumpus. It was finding the needle in the haystack, with a wit-

ness; and foolish enough did his Excellency look, as he handed it to the other, who, with very good tact, permitted no emotion to be visible, save that of joy, at finding the document.

The disgorged contents of the sack-like pockets then came necessarily into play, and the arrangement of them occupied another twenty minutes. During the clearing of this chaos, dinner was produced, and a very good one it proved, although you may scruple a little at the necessity I was under of eating it with my fingers. And well did the Kaymookâm do the honours *à la mode de Perse*. There was no other guest but the Adjutant-General, Hoossein Khan, and plentifully did his Excellency heap our plates—for plates, instead of flaps of bread, he insisted on setting before us—I suppose in compliment to me. Observing me tugging away, rather ineffectually, with my fingers at some ornithological specimen, either chicken or partridge — a tough biped whatever its specific distinction—he called out "That's not good! here 's a better one!" and seizing by the stiff shank another unhappy sufferer, from the breast of which half the flesh had been torn by his own talons, he conveyed it to my plate and deposited it on the top of the other. "May your favour never diminish!" said I, addressing myself to tear its carcass in sunder. "Here 's pickled peppers —do you eat them?" inquired his Excellency, and plunging his hand into the dish, clutched a quantity and scattered them over the wreck upon my plate, before I could reply. "May your wealth increase!" said I, and began to munch the peppers. In like

manner did he practically recommend all the viands, till at length we came to what you might call the dessert. This consisted of a vast tray of melons, his Excellency's favourites, as I have told you. They were the best Tabreez could produce, of course, and many of them had a flavour that would have won a medal from the horticultural society. But the Kaymookâm is a nice judge, and so more than a dozen were cut open for him to try. Don't be shocked at the extravagance,—they scarcely cost three halfpence a piece: *all* were tasted, two or three approved of and gobbled up, and a few more left to trifle over. This finished the dinner; and if his Excellency, like Sertorius, had dined in the scale of a balance, so as to weigh his food, the amount of increase would have been alarming. Indeed the huge vessel seemed to feel the cargo it had taken in, for in rising from the attitude of feeding, it rolled heavily, like a deep-loaded ship in a gale of wind.

Before we had well finished, the room began to fill again, and I thought business was about to recommence, as turning to one of the by-standers he said, "Well, what for to-morrow?" This must be to-morrow's first job, no doubt, said I to myself; his Excellency is going to rest, I presume, or to his harem—I must take leave. But no—"I think we should have some lamb," resumed his Excellency; "ay, some lamb pillaw." The deuce! thought I—what is he at now—the *mehmankhaneh* again? No, the man to whom he spoke was a *peish-khidmut*, and the mighty affair was his Excellency's next

day's dinner. "Yes," went he on musing, "and let us have some *bâdinjâns* (vegetable eggs) dressed with *mâs* (sour milk) and two *côreish's* (stews); and mind the sour sauce is not spoiled—let so many onions be put in it, and three—ay, three, or even four cups of vinegar—there will be no harm; yes, that will do;" and so went he on naming the dishes to be prepared, and even the sauces, to the minutest particular. I own I was not only disgusted but provoked: so far, however, as I was concerned the affair was terminated. The room was by this time inundated with a crowd of khans, begs, meerzas, eunuchs, &c. all with papers in hand or business in mouth, and I took the first opportunity to ask for leave to depart. "You are going, then," said he; "have you nothing to ask of me?"—"Nothing," replied I, "but a continuation of your Excellency's favour, and your commands, if you have any, for me to execute in my new journey. I will gladly do what I can to promote your views and those of his Royal Highness, so far as my humble power extends."—"Many thanks," said his Excellency," nothing but to keep your eyes open and look about you, and bring me correct information of all you see and hear. You have *spoken* little to me, but you have *said* a great deal, and I have understood it and will attend to it, for I am sure it is true. When you saw me silent and thoughtful before dinner, I was not inattentive,—I was weighing what you had said; and now do not forget to send me all sort of information and write me, *in English*,—you understand." As I rose to bid him adieu two

men, one on each side, took him under the arms to raise him, in spite of my *astafferullahs!* It was partly a piece of state, partly necessary from the effects of his excessive meal, and notwithstanding my entreaties to the contrary, he went with me to the door, to the astonishment and horror, I dare say, of many of those who witnessed it. So polite do circumstances make the greatest of men in Persia, and probably elsewhere! His Excellency desired my good word, thought he could make use of me, and paid this price to secure one whom otherwise he would not have condescended to notice—such is the way of the world.

The only other event worth mentioning at Tabreez, during my stay, was an experiment in rocket-firing, conducted in the presence of the Prince Royal by a gentleman who had brought out a parcel of Congreve's rockets with the expectation of disposing of them to his Royal Highness. The tenth was the day appointed; and though it was that also of my intended departure, I sent off my baggage and agreed to remain, in order to witness the scene, and follow it next morning.

It was exceedingly pretty. The Prince, with many of his family and a considerable suite, were on the ground to see the effects of this new missile, which though they did not assuredly act with the full precision which their owner anticipated and gave reason to expect, proved themselves at least a formidable, if not always a very manageable weapon in the hands of skilful artillerists. His Royal Highness was in high spirits, and after the practice

the whole cavalcade, of full two thousand horsemen, rode forward to look at the places where the balls had struck the hill side. On the way we started a poor hare, and there being two greyhounds belonging to some of the party which saw and gave chase, off started every *Feringee* after them, including two grave missionaries, who had come forth to see the unhallowed experiments. Away, away scowered every one, like madcaps, Elchee, officers and all, heedless of Prince or Khan, and a very pretty chase it was, especially as the hare took up a steep hill-face just opposite, on which the dogs turned her several times. Up they all went, scrambling and sprawling away, all but your humble servant, who, having a long ride and journey close in view, did not think it quite prudent to blow his horses, so I stopped at the foot, in spite of my steed's eagerness, and saw the whole scramble. The sight of some dozen Franks and their servants, scowering away like devils on horseback up the hill-face, formed a curious contrast to the gravity of the Prince and his thousands, who never altered their staid and stately pace, and swept like a dark cloud slowly and gradually up the steep ascent, devouring it, as it were, in their progress.

On the other side the course had been short; moving round the extremity of the hill, I saw the little knot of my countrymen at a standstill some five hundred yards distant. Poor puss had been killed, the excitement was over, and we all wended slowly back to join his Royal Highness, who, I dare say, must have been a good deal amused, though

not astonished at this burst of Frank enthusiasm for the chase. We then were entertained by the evolutions and exercise of some Koordish horsemen, who practised with the spear and skirmished before the line all the way to the gardens that surround the city. This, my last evening at Tabreez, terminated in a very pleasant dinner at the Envoy's, when I bade adieu to a society of friends whom I shall ever regard with attachment and interest.

The amusements of the evening had detained me so late that I willingly accepted the Envoy's kind offer of using his horses for the first stage, and sending on my own to await me there; so, mounting by sunrise, I turned my back on the spot where I had spent near a month of very welcome repose, and rode straight on to the village of Mayan, where my people and the baggage had spent the preceding night. There, taking my own horses, I pushed forward to Deeza-khaleel, a fine thriving village, where about three in the afternoon I found my people had procured me quarters. It was pleasant in riding through this village, with its orchards and gardens, which occupied half-an-hour, to remark the apparent prosperity of the place, and the riches, not to say comfort of its inhabitants. It occupies the borders of a fine mountain stream from the range on the north of Lake Shahee, or Ooroomia, and with its gardens covers a very extensive tract of ground.

Next morning at sunrise we were in the saddle, and I know not how it was, but I never enjoyed the first early hours of a march more. There is nothing

more curious and unaccountable than the variations of spirits and feelings to which we are subject at times, without any obvious cause. Do they depend on internal or external agencies? mental oscillations or peculiar states of the atmosphere? The morning of this day was not one bit more lovely, nor could the air be more balmy than those had been on many a previous one; and yet, on leaving Deeza-khaleel, I was conscious of a mental buoyancy which was in strong contrast to the depression under which I had laboured for the few preceding days; perhaps, it was only reaction after the existence of an unusual state of mind. All seemed smiling and delightful; the lights and shadows on the surrounding mountains, inexpressibly soft and beautiful, and the blue of the lake as it rose into view could not have been surpassed by that of any Italian piece of water any more than the azure of the heavens above us could be exceeded by the tints of an Italian sky. There was a harmony in all the scene which suited well with the peaceful occupations of the peasantry, who were pursuing their field labours in perfect security.

It is now the season of preparation for the great wheat sowing. This goes on during the whole of September and October, and multitudes of ploughs were at work breaking up the fat soil, while the labourers were employed in turning streams of water into the ground thus torn up, and breaking down the heavy clods with their spades, so as to fit it for receiving the seed. I must say, however, that the husbandry everywhere is most slovenly, and that

with such a subject to work on, a good English farmer would make a very different thing of it and produce very different results. You never see manure applied except upon melon or cucumber grounds near a town; and, in fact, the dung of animals, though carefully collected, is not applied to this purpose, but used for winter fuel. I this day observed several boys and women carefully collecting manure where a flock of sheep had lain a night or two before; but it was to be formed with cow-dung into cakes for burning, not to be thrown on the neighbouring field. The farmers have not, so far as I know, become acquainted even with the use of lime as a stimulant to land. Indeed, as land is generally more abundant than the water which is required to irrigate it, and much must thus remain uncultivated every year, fallows come to supersede in great measure the use of manure, which in our system of farming is so indispensable. The whole of this district, from Tabreez to our present Munzil, Tessouje, is, or might be, one sheet of cultivation: it abounds with fine villages, which are generally situated on the gentle declivity of the mountains, and terminates in the flat land that surrounds the whole lake. I shall close here for the present, and address my next from Ooroomia on its western side, through which my road lies.

LETTER III.

Selmâs. — Russian policy. — Kara-kishlâc. — Sportive damsels. — Kereemabâd.—Plain of Ooroomia.—Agricultural improvements. —Nejeff Koolee Khan.—Palaces and fine apartment.—City of Ooroomia.—Fortified houses. —Armenian church. —Nestorian Christians — their country.—Hakkaree Koords. — Other fierce tribes.—Meer of Rewandooz.—Dr. Ross's journey to that chief. —Contrast between Turkish and Koordish villages.—Dumdum. —Rewandooz.—Character of the people — their dress—manners.—Blindness of the old Meer.—Brothers of the Meer.— — Superstitions. — Inhospitality. — Koordish fierceness and bravery.—Laws and justice of the Meer.—Summary punishments.—Army in the field.—Capture of Accra.—Submission of Amadia.—Dr. Ross joins the Meer in camp.—Meer's appearance and conversation—His camp.—Character.—Speculations as to proceeding.

Ooroomia, 17th October.

THREE days, dear ——, have carried me from the village whence my last was dated, to this ancient and beautiful place, supposed to be the Thebarma of antiquity and the birth-place of the celebrated Zoroaster. From Tessouje our way lay through the district and plain of Selmâs, one of the finest of Azerbijan. But it has suffered greatly; in the first instance from the inroads of the Hakkaree Koords, who inhabit the mountains on the north-west; and, secondly, from the atrocious conduct of Paskevitch, the Russian general, who carried away many thousands of Armenian families from hence,

Bayazeed, Erzeroom, and other districts in this neighbourhood, leaving the whole town of Selmâs nearly, and many of its villages quite depopulated. A third cause of decay is to be found in the tyrannical conduct of Jehangeer Meerza, who lived much in this quarter during the stay of his father, the late Prince Royal, in Khorasan, and whose name is heavily laden with curses in these parts. Nevertheless, the district of Selmâs is still rich and productive, and in passing through it you see a number of fine villages, particularly towards the upper end near the mountains. But I was surprised to find that the river Selmâs, instead of being, as I had heard, a stream navigable for boat severals miles from the lake, is at this season a miserable rivulet which scarcely wetted our horses' feet while crossing it.

The plain of Selmâs itself, which I should think extended thirty miles inland from the lake, and which may in some parts be ten miles across, has at one time obviously been covered by the lake. Indeed, the gradual recession of the waters of this inland sea is a phenomenon which affords curious matter of speculation. Like all other salt lakes in this part of Asia, and some fresh, it has no outlet, although it is itself a receptacle for the waters of many and considerable streams which flow from the mountains round it. That these were once more abundant sources of supply than at present, appears probable, since, if report on the subject can at all be trusted, the lake, within the memory of man, was much larger and fuller than it now is. Its only drain at present can be from evaporation, unless an

increased demand of water for irrigation were supposed; but as there is every reason to believe that cultivation has rather diminished than increased, that cannot be the case. However the diminution of wāters may be caused, there is no doubt that a gradual increase of land takes place on the margin of the lake, and land of great richness, as is proved both by the crops it yields and by the natural grass it produces, the flocks and herds of the inhabitants being unable to consume the store of herbage in the meadows.

We purposed to have made good our way to Dilmaun, a large village, dignified, I believe, with the name of "town;" but, trusting to my *jelowdar's* guidance, we lost our way and came to a miserable village named Kara-Kishlâc, which I would recommend all future travellers to avoid. My own lodging was in a sort of cock-loft over a mud building, said to do duty as a mosque, but which appeared to have as little just claim to sanctity as it had to comfort; and of the last there was but scrimp share, for it was open to all the winds of heaven. Nor was I better off in regard to food, for though I fain would have had a dinner, the keen air having given me an excellent appetite, my rogue of a cook, unaccustomed to work with cakes of dried cow-dung, the only fuel to be had here, spoiled the fowl destined for me, so that a little dry rice, with an egg or two, was all I had to stop my cravings with. My cattle, however, were better off, for they had both shelter and food in abundance, and they were my chief care.

Next morning, crossing the plain, we ascended

a valley through certain low hills which separate the plain of Selmâs from another of about twenty miles in length and ten in breadth, also skirting the lake, and backed by the great mountains of Koordistan, many of whose summits were still spotted with snow. This plain was also fertile and well cultivated, and five or six large villages near the hills gave proof that it wanted not its portion of inhabitants. We breakfasted this day in a little valley by a clear stream, disturbing, I am sorry to say, two Koordish ladies who had come there for the purpose of washing clothes, a process which they appeared to be performing in the old Scotch fashion, with legs bare to a pretty considerable height. They were as wild birds as I ever remember to have seen, and appeared much entertained by the spectacle which we, or I should rather say *I*, afforded them. They came from some black tents above, and on our asking whether there was any milk or cream to be had, they replied, "No milk at this time of day, but the finest cream in the world." So off started one of my people on horseback to get this delicious cream; but he only got laughed at for his pains, for it appeared that the damsels had been amusing themselves at our expense, as nothing so redolent of civilized life as cream was to be found in the tents. So I drank my tea without it, leaving my servant to vent his abuse against the Koordish fair (brown) ones for the trick they had played him, and which only made them laugh the more.

Towards sunset of this day, finding our horses waxing dûll, after a march of thirty-six miles or

more, as if they should not care how soon they reached their halting-place, we dismounted at a miserable village, the first that came in our way as we opened the plain of Ooroomia, named Kereemabad, or the abode of Mercy or Kindness. Very little of either did we find there, for not a place could they or would they give us to stow ourselves and cattle in; yet, after some consultation, we thought it better to remain where we were, and where food for the animals might be had, as we were informed, than to go further, and perhaps find not even that. So we piqueted our beasts outside the village, collected the baggage into one heap, set a watch, and, after a very moderate dinner, I got under my *lahoff* upon the dry turf, and slept very tolerably till near the hour of loading in the morning.

Before sunrise we were on our way to the city of Ooroomia; and nowhere, certainly not in the East at least, do I remember passing through a richer country. All around us, in whatever direction we cast our eyes, they fell on sheets of varied cultivation, cotton, rice, millet, castor-oil plant, vineyards, orchards, and great fields, from whence already the heavy crops of wheat and barley had been reaped, prettily divided, and fringed here and there with coppice or rows of trees, willow, poplar, sinjeed (*jujube*), and others. Numbers of large villages, each encircled with its own gardens, lay thickly scattered about, and the state of those we passed through was conclusive as to the wealth and comfort of their inhabitants. Thus, for at least twenty miles, did we ride through a perfectly rich

and cultivated country to the very walls of the city, which were concealed by trees and gardens.

This day I observed two agricultural improvements which I have seen nowhere else. One was a plough, used to break up the deep soil, of far greater efficacy than the common miserable instrument. It was dragged by eight buffaloes and bullocks, the draught being from an axle with wheels of different sizes at either end; one about twenty inches or two feet in diameter, intended to go in the last-made furrow; the other, not above half as much, to run upon the yet unbroken soil, so that the axle, by this contrivance, was kept upon the level. The other improvement was the adoption of a two-wheeled cart, also drawn by buffaloes —a heavy clumsy machine, it is true, with solid wheels like the old Highland cart-wheels, which went creaking and bumping along on their most irregular circumferences, but still effective enough engines for carrying straw, and such like light bulky articles. It is not a little remarkable that these carts, or *arabas*, as they are called, though used in Turkey, Armenia, and Georgia, and even, I believe, at Khoee, should not have been adopted even at Tabreez, at Tehran, or the more eastern and southern provinces of Persia: the pace of improvement is mighty slow indeed here.

Entering the city, I went straight to the house of the Beglerbeggee, or governor, Nejeff Koolee Khan, an Affshâr nobleman of very high rank, the King having married a sister of his father, so that some of the Princes are his cousins. I had sent forward

my letters of introduction to this gentleman with a request to be furnished with lodgings; but, whether by mistake or intended attention, I was ushered into his presence at once. I found, both at the gates of the Khan's residence in the courts through which they led me, and in his presence, a great deal of real state and observance, more indeed than at the courts of many of the second-rate Princes, and the respect and ceremony which prevailed had nothing in it forced or got up for the occasion – it was the feudal lord truly surrounded by his vassals. He received me with kindness and affability, but did not either rise at my entrance or exit. In fact, he obviously assumed the style of a Prince, or nearly so, for there were several Khans present who did not sit at all; and the attendance, on the whole, was exceedingly imposing.

The Khan himself had on a shawl-cloak, which you would have allowed would make a beautiful dress—it must have been worth more than one hundred pounds sterling; and at his waist he wore a most splendid dagger, with an agate handle mounted in gold, and having at the top of the hilt a fine emerald. After sitting a considerable time, I was told that my rooms were ready, and followed a servant of the great man's to what had been a superb *dewan khaneh*. It is part of a very extensive palace, built by his father or grandfather, who, I believe, at one time made the *idawa-e-sultunut* — that is, aspired to the crown; and, assuredly, this has been quite a regal establishment. Like all others in this changing country,

where conflicting interests are continually clashing, and where he who was great to-day becomes less than the least to-morrow, it has gone much to decay; but several of the suites are still in perfect order, and remarkably handsome. The apartment, in which I am now sitting, is thirty feet long by fifteen in breadth, about twenty feet high, and handsomely vaulted. The walls are fitted up with very tasteful recesses, both arched and square, and the whole, walls and roof, have been painted of a rich white, picked out with blue, red, and gold, except for about three feet from the floor, which is salmon colour, ornamented with flowers in deeper tints, all done in oil-colours; and there are some very handsome coloured ornaments on the crests of the arches above. One whole end is occupied by a splendid window of painted glass, terminating in a Gothic arch: I wish I could convey to you the pattern. It is indescribably beautiful, and reminds one of the richest figures shown by the kaleidoscope. In the other end, there are two smaller windows of a similar construction, between which is a fire-place: the floor is of tile; but, when suitably dressed up, is first covered with mats, and over them with rich carpets. The palace contains many smaller rooms of equal beauty, and, in fact, I know few things like it in Persia, except at Ispahan; for, unlike the buildings of the present day, it is constructed of solid brick and mortar. So for once, at least, I am well lodged.

October 19.—I have been much pleased with Ooroomia, which I am now about to quit. The

Beglerbeggee has been extremely kind to me, and therefore I think him a very fine fellow. There were some reasons for it, to be sure; for, independent of the letters of introduction I brought, I made him rather a handsome present. But some folks do not think it necessary to acknowledge such attentions even with kindness. Nejeff Koolee Khan is a nobleman of high rank, not only by station, but by birth. He is the hereditary chief of the Kossimloo Affshârs, the principal *teereh*, or division, as *he* tells me, of the tribe, which is probably the most numerous and extensively spread in Persia. Nader Shah was, as you know, an Affshâr; but the Khan seems to think very lightly of this, for, he says, that Nader Shah's division were the *servants* of the Kossimloos. At all events, his forefathers for eight generations have held the same office as himself—that of Beglerbeggee, or governor of the city and district of Ooroomia.

His grandfather, Imaum Koolee Khan, was a chief of so much power and influence that, though only twenty-four years of age, in the troubles succeeding the death of Nader, and before the confirmation of Kereem Khan upon the throne, he became competitor with other Khans and chiefs for the crown. But their ambition cost them dear; for most of them were destroyed, and among them Imaum Koolee Khan, who, having met the governor of Khoee in arms, was defeated, and fled back to Ooroomia, where, arriving much overheated, he called for wine, and died in consequence of the fever it produced. Nejeff Koolee Khan insinuates that he

owed his end to poison, but there seems to be no sufficient proof of this.

His son, Hoossein Koolee Khan, being then a mere child, the late Khan's brother, Mahomed Koolee Khan, either seized upon or was placed in his brother's room, where he continued during the reign of Aga Mahomed Khan; but on the murder of that monarch, when Saduc Khan Sheghaghee and Jaffer Koolee Khan of Khoee arose in opposition to the present King, the said Mahomed Koolee Khan joined them and shared in their defeat. The fate of the unfortunate Saduc Khan is well known; he was starved to death by being built up in a cell, because, forsooth, the King had taken an oath that he would not *shed his blood;* and oaths must be kept! With Mahomed Koolee Khan he used less ceremony; for, proceeding to Ooroomia, he took him prisoner, beat him, tortured him by fire and by preventing him from sleep till he gave up his property and wealth, and then sent him off to Saree in Mazunderan, where he died, or was poisoned.

The King then put the son of the former Beglerbeggee in his father's place, and there he remained a faithful servitor of the Crown until he died. The King married his sister, by whom he had Malek Cossim Meerza, and some other sons. This lady dying, and his majesty being, as appears, very graciously disposed towards the family, he next took a *daughter* of the Khan's, consequently, a *niece* of his former wife, by whom he has also had more than one son; so that the present Khan, who succeeded his father some fourteen years ago, has

Princes cousin-germans, and Princes at once his cousins and nephews—a pretty medley of kindred. Thus, however, the Beglerbeggee becomes regarded nearly in the light and rank of a *Shah Zadeh*, and maintains the state of one. He is served with much the same ceremony, and has a *nokara khaneh*, or band of music, which plays above his gateway at certain times, &c. In his address, he is affable and polite; moderate in capacity, I should judge; and in face almost the exact image of our friend and neighbour L——, with the addition of a beard and mustachios; and now, I dare say, you have enough of my friend the Khan.

Of the city and its environs, I must say a few words. It has an aspect of more comfort and solidity than any other I remember in Persia. The gardens, which embrace it to the very walls, unite their foliage with that of many trees within them to produce a rich and verdant aspect; for every house of consideration has its gardens, with rows of chenârs and poplars towering above the inclosure. The streets are wider than in most other towns, and have generally a stream of water running in the midst, so that each house may enjoy at will this necessary of life. Few ruins are visible; for, where any exist, they are generally concealed by the wall, which incloses each tenement, like a fort. This mode of rendering each house — that is, those belonging to the great — a sort of stronghold is remarkable, and very characteristic of the state of society which used to subsist in Ooroomia. Situated on the borders of Koordistan, and in the midst of

a "land debateable," frequented by the fierce tribes and clans of that wild country, most commonly at blood-feud with one another, it became a matter of necessity for each chief to have at least a place of refuge in case of attack from his enemies. When Mookree and Hakkaree, and Affshâr and Zerzaw met here, as on a common neutral ground, how, without such means of defence, could bloodshed and murder be prevented, where the police is weak, or the parties are beyond its power? It was like what we hear of our own Scottish capital in former days:—

> When the streets of High Dun Edin
> Saw falchions gleam and lances redden
> —And heard the Slogan's deadly yell!—

And thus, I dare say, the streets of Ooroomia have often been the scene of bloody frays, and the Koordish spear has many a time and oft clashed against the Affshâr scimitar.

Ooroomia, though an ancient city, and known as such even in the days of the Romans, possesses no show of antiquities. An old tower and mosque of Arab architecture, and built about six or seven hundred years back, can scarcely be regarded as entitled to much consideration. An Armenian church, if we may credit the assertion of its present congregation, has a better claim to attention; for it is said to be one founded by the original Christians of this country. But this claim rests merely on tradition; for, as to the building itself, whatever may have been its original form or size, it now resembles nothing externally so much as a mud hut. The principal part, indeed, is under

ground, and we entered it through a low door, scarcely large enough to admit a man into the narrow passage beyond: this led us, stooping, into a dark hole, the form of which, even when the eye became reconciled to the obscurity, was hardly to be made out from the quantity of strange hangings that encumbered rather than adorned its walls—offerings of the piety, or superstition, or vanity of its frequenters—suspicious-looking garments, like the shifts of women and the trousers of men, hung from the roof and cornices like the tattered banners of some ancient castle hall or chapel, but quite without their dignity. On one side of what might be the altar, lay a black bonnet, worn by the priest; on the opposite side, a tattered copy of the Armenian Bible. Beyond was a room, into which none but the priest was permitted to enter, and in this the woman, who showed the church, said there was a stone with some writing in Armenian upon it. The priest was not to be found, so I made no attempt to enter the sanctuary, as, without his aid, I could have made nothing out had I succeeded—indeed, even with his aid, I doubt if much could have been done, for these *khaleefahs*, or priests, are very ignorant.

Bordering as Ooroomia does upon Armenia, it reckons among its population a great many Armenians; and as Assyria, which may be said to be coterminous on the other side, is the chief abode of the Nestorian or Syrian Christians, usually called *Nasserânees* (Nazerenes), the whole country affords a most interesting field for exploration, not only of antiquities, but of much that regards the history

of the Syrian Church; for there is little doubt that, in the rude receptacles of the Nestorian and Syrian monasteries, in these wild mountains, are to be found, could we but come at them, many ancient, and probably valuable manuscripts, in the Syrian and Chaldean tongues, connected with the early times of our religion, and many monuments and inscriptions on stone, which, if deciphered, might lead to very interesting historical, if not theological, discoveries. The misfortune is, that the whole of this country is in the hands of barbarians, so rude and suspicious, that any search after such literary treasures becomes next to impracticable; for, whenever inquiries regarding them are made, the universal opinion of the people is, that the object is not to discover literary or religious wealth, but hidden treasures of gold and silver—the only ones they recognize as valuable: indeed, to impress them with the belief that either manuscripts or inscriptions can be prized for any other purpose than that of using them for such discoveries would be impossible.

Not more than three severe but short days' journey west of Ooroomia, among the lofty and almost inaccessible mountains of Jewâr, there exists a population of these Nestorian Christians, who have lived there for ages, and are said to be the descendants of certain Christians of Mesopotamia, who fled to this difficult region for refuge from the persecutions of Jovian. They amount to better than fourteen thousand families, which constitute a sort of commonwealth of their own, separate from the rest of the world, and who yield neither obedi-

ence nor tribute to any foreign authority, and, though professing, as some say, a nominal adherence to the head of the Hakkaree Koords who lives at Julamerick, are, in reality, subject to none but their own chief or chiefs. The principal of these chiefs, who are patriarchs or bishops, and are termed by them *khaleefahs*, or caliphs, resides generally in the monastery of Kojannes, and maintains great state. He exercises a perfect authority over his subjects both in spiritual and temporal affairs. Each village has also its *khaleefah*, or priest, who acts also as magistrate, and there were dubious rumours of prelates of intermediate degrees residing at other places, and some of my informants declared that the country was not entirely occupied by Nestorians, but partly inhabited by Koords and *Mussulmans*, meaning Sheahs, or Persians.

These people are represented as living in great comfort, being rich, and their country abounding in all sorts of produce, vegetable and mineral, having mines of lead, antimony, arsenic, and other metals. They are particularly jealous of their freedom, and very able to defend it, for they are very brave and resolute, have twelve thousand capital *toffunchees* (or musketeers), and a particularly defensible country, being a cluster of lofty mountains, intersected by deep ravines and frightful chasms, the beds of rapid torrents. These chasms are spanned by a single tree, which can be removed or let down at either end at pleasure, thus absolutely debarring exit or entrance. I have partially described this country in my "Travels on the Banks of the Caspian Sea,"

and made it the scene of a tale entitled "Mourâd and Euxabeeth," which you may remember. Judge then how interesting a spot this must be for the researches of an antiquary, and particularly a theological one; and judge how unwillingly I turned my steps from this interesting but dangerous—almost impracticable—country.

Nor are the immediate neighbours of these Nestorians,—namely, the Hakkaree Koords,—less dangerous customers for honest inquirers to deal with. Their country, like that of the Nestorians, is a congregation of rugged ravines, covered with jungle, but interspersed here and there with fertile plains, which yield an abundant return to the labourer and pasture for their numerous flocks. Like them, too, they suspect and dislike all strangers, whom they consider as spies and interlopers. They obey none but their respective chiefs; but are not so exclusive in their practice of robbery and plunder, for they strip indiscriminately every one they catch. Even other tribes of Koords, if not too powerful to be touched, are not always safe. This is the country which, it is said, no power has ever succeeded in reducing to subjection; and, certainly, the ruling powers around do not seem likely to achieve the task; although, I believe, the Ameer-e-Nizâm did penetrate with an army to Julamerick, a strong place in the mountains, where their chief Noor Oollah Khan resides; and the same chief has consented to accept a *khelut*, or dress of honour, from the present heir apparent, and to obey his commands—as *Koords* are wont to obey.

That they are as treacherous as inhospitable has been fatally demonstrated in their conduct to the unfortunate traveller Schultz, a German *sçavant*, sent into this country by the French Institute, I think, to examine its stores of literary wonders. He had made some very interesting researches in the vicinity of Lake Vân, and the site of the ancient Artemita, and had collected a great deal bearing upon that important desideratum of Oriental inquiry —the decipherment of the arrow-headed characters found on ancient monuments in these countries, as well as at Babylon and Persepolis, &c.* He had even succeeded in making good his way in safety so far through the country of the Nestorian Christians, and had been entertained with apparent hospitality by their *Khaleefah* Mar Shimoon, and had obtained from him several manuscripts and papers, with which he was proceeding towards Tabreez, attended by a guard of the Julamerick Khan's people,—that personage having, as it is also said, received him with the same show of hospitality,—when just near the frontiers, they enticed him into a narrow ravine, on pretext of showing him some old ruin. The way was a mere sheep-path, and he was, unhappily, induced to leave the *cafilah*, or party with which it appears he was travelling, to see this place; but he had got to a very little distance when he

* It must be gratifying to all who are interested in this most curious subject that this desideratum has been in a great degree attained by the industry and intelligence of Major Rawingsen of the Honourable East India Company's Service, who has already deciphered several inscriptions in the arrow-headed character.

was shot by one of these very guards, who also put to death either one or two of his servants. Another, however, being well mounted, contrived to escape while they were dragging the bodies out of the way; and, getting to Tabreez, told the tale, which is all that is known of poor Schultz's death.

This country is, indeed, overrun with savage tribes, the only check on whom is their relative weakness. The Belbâs, a tribe once numerous and powerful, though now much broken, inhabit the hills and plains of Balig and Lahijan, not very far from hence, and every now and then amuse the neighbouring districts of Sooldooz, Serdusht, and even Souje-Bulâgh with a *chuppow*, as the highlanders used to descend from their hills on the low lands of Moray, "where every gentleman had a right to take his pleasure," according to their creed. And there are the Rawans and the Harkis, and the Nowchais, and fifty others I dare say, who all have the will, and some of them the power, thus to "take their pleasure." Happily, a power has arisen in the West, which, though of the roughest sort, has at least had the good effect of taming some of these fierce marauders, and reducing them to a wholesome and necessary, though tyrannical, subjection, and thus rendering a part of the country permeable and safe on certain conditions.

Mehemet Pashah, now better known as the "Meer of Rewandooz," was not many years ago, like most other Koordish chiefs, lord of a small district, and leader of the warriors of his own tribe, which had no other designation than that of Rewandooz. He

began his career by setting aside his own father, as incapable of conducting the affairs of the tribe in troublesome times. Some say that the old man, being of a peaceable and devout disposition, turned *Sooffee*, or saint, renounced the world and its vanities, and placed his son in his own room; I wish for the Meer's credit that such may be the true version of the story, but it is at best doubtful. In like manner he disposed of several of his brothers, I fear, not merely in an arbitrary manner, and fixed himself supreme and firmly at length in his native district of Rewandooz. He then set to work strengthening his power, and raising followers, so as to prepare for future struggles. But the commencement of his true rise dates from the war between Persia and Russia, when the Prince Royal who had made some dispositions to crush the Meer, was forced to withdraw his troops in order to concentrate them against more formidable foes. The Meer, taking advantage of this opportunity, not only retook all the territory of which he had been deprived by the Prince, but extended his arms westward and northward with such success that he has now obtained control over a great part of Upper Mesopotamia, besides the districts extending from Erbile (Arbela) to Kerkook, inclusive, on the east of the Tigris.

It is affirmed that he has fifty thousand men under his orders, of whom the better half are regularly paid and kept in constant work, for he is still actively employed in reducing such coterminous districts as are unable to oppose him, and thus rapidly increases his dominions. But the most singular part

of the story is the great *moral* change which he has effected in the countries he has thus subjected; for instead of being, as they were, occupied by a nation, or rather nations, of robbers, who could not see a traveller pass without attempting to stop and strip him, and who, as they say of themselves, would cut a man's throat for an egg in his hand, there is not now a thief or theft in the country. The whole craft and practice of robbery has been cut short by a summary process: whoever is caught possessing himself of the goods of others is punished on the spot, or put to death without mercy. For a first offence, the punishment, according to circumstances, is the loss of an eye, of a hand, or sometimes of the nose; for the next, some other mutilation more severe is inflicted; but a third offence is always punished with death.

This is no mere *brutum fulmen* of a law, stern, but inoperative, which it is at the option of juries to mitigate or explain away, so as to blunt its overweening harshness; it is a law, the sharpness of which is called for by the circumstances and the state of society which it is intended to restrain—the law of a robber chief, required to control his fierce banditti, and fearlessly and unsparingly enforced; the people know that there is no appeal from its sentence, no mercy in its justice, and therefore they tremble and obey: anything less bloody and unbending would, under existing circumstances, be ineffectual; and so effectual has it proved, that, I am assured, were any man in the countries where the sway of the Meer is fully established, to see a purse of gold on the road,

he would not touch it, but report the fact to the head of the next village, whose duty it would be to send for it and keep it, until properly claimed, making his report at the same time to the Meer himself.

It is told of him, that being informed that one of his brothers, rather a favourite too, in riding by a poor man's garden put forth his hand and plucked a pomegranate, without asking the owner's permission, he sent for him and charged him with the fact, which was not denied. "And which was the hand you put forth to do the act?" The young man held it forth. "And with which finger did you pluck the fruit?"—"With this," was the reply.—"Then let that finger be immediately cut off," said the Meer, and the sentence was carried into execution on the spot. There is another story current which reminds us of a similar one related of Nader Shah, to whom, in fierce remorselessness of character, he appears to bear no small resemblance. The body of a man, mutilated by wolves and jackals, was found near the highway, not far from certain villages. Intelligence of the fact reached the Meer, who caused all the usual inquiries to be made, but without producing any discovery of the murderers. The villagers, when questioned, laid the fault upon the wolves of the neighbouring jungles, who had already devoured a great part of the carcass. "Then bring those wolves to me," was the order given in reply to this excuse; and the whole village, knowing the consequence of failure, was in a bustle to catch the wolves. Some were taken, and brought to the

great man, who put them one after another to a lingering death with terrible tortures, the sight of which, it is affirmed, so terrified the villagers, that they exerted themselves to discover and give up to justice the real murderers, in order to save themselves from the terrible fate which that of the poor wolves seemed to point out as likely to become theirs. The tale is not very probable, but shows the light in which the dealings of this chief are regarded.

To aid in describing a chief who seems fated to exercise an important influence over a large portion of this very interesting country, I am tempted to make use of some extracts from a journal kept by Dr. Ross, the medical gentleman in attendance on the British resident at Baghdad, who had the singular good fortune to make a journey through this dangerous country, by invitation of the Meer himself. It appears that Meer Mustapha, the father of the chief, is blind, and that in the hope of restoring him to sight, he had sent to request Colonel Taylor that an English doctor might be sent to try his skill. The opportunity of cultivating relations with this singular man was readily seized on by Colonel Taylor, and Dr. Ross being charged with this interesting duty, departed for the country of the Meer under convoy of his uncle Bayazeed Beg, who had been sent to Baghdad on this mission to the British resident.

It is necessary first, however, to tell you that in addition to all his conquests, both in Mesopotamia and in the lower parts of Assyria, the Meer had at that time turned his arms against the large and fer-

tile, though mountainous and difficult, country of Amadia, which lies to the north-west of Rewandooz and to the north of Mousul. This state, or rather Pashalic, for its chief was a Pashah, is spoken of by all in the highest terms of commendation, for its productiveness, beauty, and density of population. Several persons of high respectability agreed in declaring to me that it contained twelve thousand villages, not petty hamlets, but consisting of from two to three hundred families (or houses) each. A statement which must be enormously beyond the truth, as, taking each village at only one hundred and fifty houses, and giving but five persons to each house, the aggregate would be nine millions—a population greatly exceeding that of the whole of Persia: it must therefore be taken only to mean that Amadia is very populous.

It was ruled by a Pashah, the descendant of a Koordish family, who received his investure from the Porte; but misrule, and jealousy, and domestic brawls, led to his overthrow. The country became split into numerous petty chiefships, the heads of which paid no regard to the reigning Pashah, a weak and foolish man, who had lost all authority, and who shut himself up in his castle of Amadia, secure in its supposed impregnability, while the Meer was overrunning the country, and one by one reducing all these petty and self-constituted chiefs. At last he laid siege to Amadia itself; and by availing himself of family feuds and treason, bribed his way into that important fortress, from whence he directed his efforts with still greater vigour to re-

duce the remaining strongholds of the country. At the period of Dr. Ross's journey, however, Amadia had not fallen, and the Meer was besieging Akra or Accra, a very strong fortress upon the Zâb, about fourteen hours from N.N.W. to N. of Erbile.

It was towards the middle of May, 1833, when Dr. Ross left Baghdad; and among the first remarks he made, was the great contrast which was observable in point of cultivation and population, between the Turkish and Koordish territories. In the former, all the villages were deserted, the inhabitants having taken flight to avoid the government imposts. Every creature that remained was open-mouthed in complaint against Allee Pashah of Baghdad, and the moment a man belonging to the government appeared, away they ran to hide themselves. On the other hand, no sooner did the party reach Altoun-Kupree, than all the people flocked out to meet Bayazeed Beg, wearing flowers on their heads as on holidays, and pressed forward to kiss his hand, and shouted and cheered as he passed along.

From Altoun-Kupree to Erbile the plain was covered with flowers interspersed amongst the richest verdure, and the country was very populous. The reception of Bayazeed Beg, at the latter place, is described by Dr. Ross as being in the highest degree picturesque and beautiful, both from the rich costumes and from the affectionate animation that gave spirit to the scene.

On the 19th of May, Dr. Ross left Erbile for

Rewandooz, near which place resided old Mustapha Beg, the object of the professional part of his journey; and traversing a mountainous but very fertile country, much covered with low oak, and wild almond, and surmounting several steep passes, they reached Dumdum, the residence of the old man, from whence they could see the valley and fortress of Rewandooz, the latter not more than an hour's ride distant. Dumdum is a small fort built upon a precipitous promontory of rock one hundred feet high, insulated by a wall built across the neck, and overlooking a small town of one hundred poor houses, in a perfect jungle of gardens filled with every sort of fruit tree. From this place the town of Rewandooz appeared to consist of about two thousand poor houses with a sort of fort situated in a hollow of the mountains, on the south bank of the greater Zâb, over which there was a bridge of trees, resting on two stone piers, and covered with branches and earth. The river was narrow, rapid, rough, and deep, but eight hours further down, kellecks (or rafts of skins) can go across. The Doctor was not permitted to visit Rewandooz, nor to go much about the country, but among other objects of interest which he heard of, he mentions one in particular; a pillar of marble standing upon a quadrangular base, in all about three spears (thirty to thirty-five feet) high, and covered with inscriptions.* Several Europeans, at different times, had expressed a wish to visit it, but permission was always refused. It was

* It will be found, hereafter, that I also heard of this pillar.

said to be two days' journey from Dumdum, and has been supposed to be a pillar set up by Semiramis.

Of Dumdum and its inhabitants, Dr. Ross does not speak with much applause. Of the latter, he says, "the people appear to know little of the good things of this world. The great folks are miserably dressed, and their houses mere pig-styes. They are sulky savages; they will not give even a draught of milk without growling, and everything further has almost to be forced from them. When I gave them medicine they grumbled that I did not furnish bottles to put it in." The dress of the riches men is the same as that of the Baghdadees. The poorer wear a short jacket, with wide camlet trousers, and a felt jerkin without sleeves, cotton shoes and woollen stockings; and on their head, the peculiar Koordish turban. The women wear a blue shirt with wide trousers, tied at the ankles, and a square mantle fastened by two corners hanging down the back. On their head they wear a round plate of silver, from which hang down large drops with a coin fastened to each, round the head and neck or the whole affair is made of silver coins. The mode of salutation is curious; each takes the other by the right wrist, and kisses the forearm. Every evening six or eight of the villagers dined "below the salt," at the Meer's house, and several old warriors, the friends of his youth. Ophthalmia the Doctor observed to be frequent here.

His patient, the old Meer (Mustapha,) turned out to be irrecoverably blind. The cause, by his own account, ophthalmia, brought on by putting snow

upon his head, one day when much heated by ascending a mountain, on the top of which he found a bed of it. Report had asserted that he had been blinded by order of his son, by the *meel* (red hot iron pencil), or the hot iron cup, but this Dr. Ross declares to be assuredly false. The cause of his resignation in favour of that son is less certain. Some assert that his deposition was compulsory; others, that, being convinced his son was calculated to become a greater man than himself, he had voluntarily resigned in his favour.

The Meer, or rather Pashah, Mahomed has four brothers living. Two of them, Timoor Khan and Suleiman Beg, are kept in irons in a fort five hours distant from Rewandooz. Another, Ahmed Beg, was governor of Erbile, and the fourth, Rasool Beg, was with the army. The Meer has three wives but no family, nor, as he is forty-five, is he likely to have any, in which case Rasool Beg is regarded as his successor.

The Doctor appears to have been but shabbily treated at Dumdum, from whence he returned to Erbile to await the orders of the Meer. On his way he saw the people of a village bringing their children to a very old woman who happened to pass, and who *blew* or grunted a prayer over them, and gave them pieces of old rags and coins, which also she blessed, and which were fixed to the caps of the little ones as charms against evil. The Doctor found the Koords, like all mountaineers, very superstitious; "every hill and every ravine has its goblin, and near Rewandooz there is a cavern full

of them." From thence, in 1831, the roaring of cannon was heard to issue in the direction of the town; and the plague soon followed. The reports continued for a month or two, after which they and the disease suddenly ceased together. Many people of respectability declared this to be a fact.

The attention experienced by Dr. Ross, both on his way to Erbile and for some time after his arrival there, was by no means of a nature to prepossess him much in favour of Koordish hospitality. It appears that from the moment his first Mehmandar, Bayazeed Beg, had given up his charge at Dumdum, a marked and very unfavourable change had taken place in the treatment he received, there being no one to coerce the churls into decent conduct. "They are pleasant people enough," says Dr. Ross, "until they are forced to go to charges, and then out comes their sulky nature—they have neither true generosity nor hospitality—very different from the Arab tribes, who gave what they had with a good grace, and even pressed one before another to offer their gifts;" yet had they not been guided from camp to camp as friends of the Sheikh, the very persons who treated them so kindly, would have been the first to plunder and strip them.

At Erbile Dr. Ross saw much of Koords and Koordish manners, and speaks strongly of their fierce and turbulent dispositions. "The element of the Koord," says he, "is war. He is trained to it from his cradle, and is never happy but in skirmishes and battles; I have seen boys of twelve and fifteen suffering under the most severe wounds, re-

ceived in recent fights. I understand their battles are very sanguinary. They begin with their rifles, but soon come to use the dagger all in earnest. No Arab blustering—all right hard fighting; and the return of killed and wounded is generally very great. They hold the Baghdad government and its troops in the most thorough contempt, and say, if the city was likely to be of any use to them, the Turks would not stand in their way a day. Erbile and Kupree they found occasion for, and took accordingly; the former *in one hour*. They depend on no country but their own for the supply of all their wants. Everything they require is produced at home, and while their mountains form impregnable defences against foreign invaders, their rugged sides and valleys, with little effort, produce abundantly everything they desire to cultivate, and afford a never-failing supply of wood, water, and pasture."

The country around Erbile is let out by the Pashah to the Sheikhs, in districts, after the manner of the feudal system. The T'hye, or Taee Arabs, are subject to the Pashah, and send a large contingent to his army, which was then at Accra. The Pashah appeared to be well liked, or rather feared; perhaps on account of his strict mode of government. Theft and robbery are scarcely ever heard of, and no door is ever closed at night; yet punishment by death is seldom inflicted: for theft, a hand is chopped off; for desertion, a foot; and for other crimes, the loss of one or both eyes is held sufficient. Occasionally, however, a severe and

striking example is made. A Sheikh of the Taee tribe of Arabs, all notorious plunderers, having been driven across the Tigris by the more powerful tribe of Jerbah, took refuge in the Meer's country, where for some time he lived in peace and quietness, according to the rules and regulations laid down by that chief. But tired out with inaction, the passage of a small caravan close to his camp afforded a temptation too strong to be resisted; he plundered it and possessed himself of the goods it contained. But ere the evening of the second day—ere almost he had time to reckon up his ill-gotten gain, half a dozen of Koords made their appearance, and riding up to his tent, without either ceremony or explanation, struck off his head at the door, after which they as quietly departed.

While at Erbile, where he was civilly received by Ahmed Beg, the Meer's brother, and governor of the place, and was visited by Sultaun Beg, a chief from the camp. The Doctor learned that the army consisted of from fifteen to twenty thousand men, who were idle in camp, Accra having been taken some time before. This stronghold, it appears, is situated on the top of an almost perpendicular rock, approachable only by one path, so narrow that two men can scarcely mount abreast. The natives believed that no power on earth could take it, nor did the Pashah himself expect it to fall so soon; but it so happened that having been attacked in person during a reconnoitering party, by an ambush, and almost taken prisoner, his people were so furious that he led them next morning against the place, which was

actually carried in three hours, with the loss of only one hundred and fifty men on his side. The Koords of Amadia were so appalled by this *coup-de-main*, that it was supposed they would give up the place without any more fighting.

On the 30th of May, a letter was received from the Pashah, conveying to the governor his commands that Dr. Ross should remain at Erbile till sent for, but should be attended to with the utmost respect; an injunction which had a powerful effect in improving the comforts of his situation. On the 6th of June information was received that the affairs of Amadia were settled, the former Pashah, Seyed, having decamped, and Moossa Pashah being now placed in his stead; Selim Pashah was placed in Accra, and all the country, having submitted to the Rewandooz government, was in perfect quiet. Yet it was not till the 3rd of July, after many remonstrances, and frequent detentions, upon false assurances of the Pashah's speedy arrival at Erbile, that an order arrived from his Highness to forward the Doctor to the camp. That personage, it appears, keeps his movements in the profoundest mystery; no one is ever able to guess when or whither a march may take place, nor, until mounted, even the direction the troops are to take.

Dr. Ross crossed the Zâb on a *kelleck*, or raft of inflated skins covered with brushwood, which he describes as resembling the representation of Neptune's car, and it was towed across by two horses, which, being first driven into the water, were urged across by the people on the raft, who

held fast by their tails. The party reached Accra by a route of fourteen hours, or fifty-six miles N.N.W. to N.; and Dr. Ross considers both Erbile and Accra as pretty nearly due-north of Baghdad.

The Pashah received him well, but sent privately to beg his excuse for not *rising up* to receive him—a compliment due, he was aware, to the King of England's servant, but which, being surrounded by newly conquered people, he was desirous to avoid paying, as implying an acknowledgment of equality which it might not be politic for him publicly to admit. He found the Pashah, a benevolent pleasing-looking man of about forty-five years of age; fair, marked with the small-pox, and blind of an eye, which was depressed and opake. His beard was about twelve inches long, of a light brown colour, the lower half being uncombed and quite felted together: in other respects, he was rather tidy in dress. He was lame of one leg from the kick of a horse, and spoke with a weak voice. He entered into long conversations, more than once, with Dr. Ross, and chiefly on general subjects; inquired regarding the mode of education in England; the religion of India and China—the latter country he thought was ours, as well as the former. He also desired to know what terms we were on with Persia, and with Russia. On another occasion, he made many inquiries as to the uses and effects of medicine; the state of the pulse in illness; of the plague, cholera, &c.; then he would pass to more warlike subjects, and speak of guns and

pistols, producing an old English double-barrelled gun and a rifle, which, with a sword, a telescope, and an umbrella, a wooden bed, and a few carpets, composed the greater part of his tent furniture. Close to his own tent, there was a large double-poled one, in which he holds *durbar* in the forenoon, and at night. He never went to bed till after dawn, and slept till nine or ten in the forenoon. A quarter of an hour before the last prayer, a noisy band struck up; and at prayer-time, a gun was fired.

The force, in camp, Dr. Ross understood to be only about ten thousand men, not half the original army, the rest having been sent home for the harvest. The camp itself had no pretensions to military order; the only thing regular was a ring of small tents round that of the Pashah, containing his own guard, in number three thousand. These also act as his servants. The infantry have rifles and daggers; the cavalry, lances and daggers. Every chief of an *ashayer*, or clan, had his own tribe encamped about him, separate from the rest, which spoiled the look of the camp, so that it was spread out to an extent which, according to the rules of European castrametation, would contain fifty thousand men; yet, notwithstanding all this want of discipline, or order, not a sound was heard, and every man could be in one spot in five minutes. The men were of their own accord constantly firing at marks; and every evening from one to two hundred of the soldiers dined in the Pashah's tent, coming by turns from the different tribes. A

number of prisoners were remarked in the camp heavily ironed on the neck and legs. The Doctor mentions, that it is the Pashah's custom to purchase from the captors every sort of property taken in war, and in general at a price twice as large as any other buyer would give.

On the 8th of July, Dr. Ross left the Pashah's camp and took the road to Mosul. On the other side of the Zâb he found one hundred Arabs of the Boo-Selmân tribe, ready mounted to escort him through the remainder of the Rewandooz chieftain's territory. He remonstrated against the attendance of such a host; but the leader of the band informed him that his orders were precise, and that he could not abate him one man; and the Doctor takes occasion here to point out the contrast between the customs of officials in the Pashah's and in the Turkish territory. The moment he entered the latter, he was stunned by demands for *buksheesh* (presents), and, after fleecing him of what he might have about him, the sturdy beggars followed to his home for more. In the territories of Rewandooz the word was never mentioned. In all parts comparisons were drawn between the government of Allee Pashah of Baghdad and of the Meer, to the greatest possible disadvantage of the former, against whom treason was openly spoken, while the Meer of Rewandooz was as openly extolled.

So far the notes of Dr. Ross. The account given by most of the persons whom I met with, best qualified to afford information on the subject, coincided in most particulars with that given in

these notes. The character of the Meer is shown forth in his acts. He is inordinately ambitious, and quite unscrupulous in regard to the means of attaining his ends; prudent and far-sighted, but jealous and suspicious in the extreme; strongly imbued with notions of a stern justice, but practising its dictates rather as a means of further aggrandizement than for its own sake. He is careless of spilling blood, but not prone to kill in wantonness, or without a cause; yet never sparing when a cause, however slight, exists. I was informed that a certain tribe of Koords, having opposed him with vigour during the siege of Amadia, and persisted in holding out against him even after the fall of that place, he turned the force of his arms against them; and, having with considerable trouble subdued them, he put to death all that fell into his hands, to the amount of several thousands, as a warning to others.

The jealousy of the Meer extends only to strangers travelling in the country without apparent business; merchants, muleteers, or the inhabitants of circumjacent countries, require no passport, and are free to come and go; but persons coming from a distance, particularly if from states which have evinced hostility at any time, would run the risk of being stopped and imprisoned as spies. I inquired what might likely be my own case, were I to enter his country without previously securing permission so to do; the reply from all was to the same purpose, that it would be the height of imprudence to attempt such a step; that he was a man of *budfikr*, evil thoughts,

who might take it in his head I was a spy, and treat me ill, particularly as coming from Tabreez. On being pressed to explain what they meant by bad treatment, they said I should probably be confined in some strong place till the Meer's pleasure could be known, and then sent out of the country in such a manner as to see as little of it as possible; that for the sake of his own good name, I might probably meet with no violence in his territories, but that I might very probably *fall amongst thieves* on crossing the frontier, in my way out of them; a very easy expedient in so disturbed a country.*

All this was matter of serious consideration to me. The character of this remarkable chief, and the rapid progress in power he had made within the last five or six years, together with the important moral change it was likely to effect in this part of Asia, rendered it no less a point of duty than of curiosity, to see and become acquainted with him, and judge how far report had done him justice. With this

* The fate of this remarkable man was not just what might have been anticipated. In process of time his progress and exploits on the Turkish territories occasioned a powerful and combined movement against him on the part of the Porte. Resheed Pashah, who commanded the army in Diarbekir, and on the side of Koordistan, moved against him on one side, while Allee Pashah of Baghdad, and Mahomed Pashah of Mousul, attacked his territories on the south and west. The Meer defended himself valiantly; and, had his own troops been true, would have laughed the combined forces to scorn. But the Meer was not popular in the conquered countries. His severity had made him more feared than loved. Some of his officers were treacherous; and it is certain, that those who would have stood by him to the last on common occasions, were dismayed by seeing the sanjack

view, I had received from the envoy a letter, together with certain presents, which it was my object to convey to him in person, as the commencement of a friendly intercourse, which hereafter might prove useful and convenient. My plan was, on my arrival at Ooshnoo, a place two days' journey hence, to which I mean to go, and which is but sixty miles from Rewandooz, to send a letter mentioning the nature of my credentials, and proposing that, if his Highness saw fit to receive them from my own hands, he should send me a guide and safe conduct under his own hand; but if otherwise, and that he should object to receive me, he might depute some one to receive the presents. You may judge of my disappointment at learning here that the Meer, instead of being at Rewandooz, as I hoped, was full ten days' journey off, in Mesopotamia, where he was prosecuting his conquests. Thus, were I to send to him, at least twenty days must elapse before the answer could arrive, and twenty more would be required for me to visit him and to

(colours) of the Sultan arrayed against them. Lingering remains of veneration for the successor of the Prophet and the head of their religion, forbade the Koords to oppose in arms the troops of the Sultan. The Meer felt this; and, after losing one after another his best strongholds, about the end of August 1836, he actually surrendered himself into the hands of Allee Pashah of Baghdad. He was sent in irons to Constantinople, where he was kept in a sort of half-honourable confinement for some time, but after a few months was pardoned, and appointed to the government of his own country, on promise of good behaviour. But he never reached it—why, or how, I know not: he was put to death upon the road, no doubt, by orders of his sublime master and conqueror.

return; a delay which, as my time has already run short, it is impossible to incur. On the other hand, however desirous I might be to undertake so very interesting an enterprise, there were sufficient reasons existing to deter me from putting life or liberty in jeopardy, so palpably as must be done by entering the country of the Meer without his own permission. So once more, with extreme reluctance, I sacrificed inclination to duty; and, contenting myself with the best information I could pick up in the coterminous countries about this remarkable chief, to take my way to Baghdad by Soolimaniah. Even this will carry me through a route comparatively little known, and show me a good stretch of Koordistan, though nothing in comparison of the other route. But you know not the full extent of my self-denial. Had I gone by Rewandooz, and possibly by Amadia, I should have come down upon Mosul, and visited the site of ancient Nineveh and the tomb of the Prophet Jonas. But this, too, I must give up, and I hope, dear ——, you will give me credit for some consideration and self-control when you hear this; for how easily might I have found an excuse for another month's delay? but no, —honour bright—a sense of duty, and the "lingering chain" of Goldsmith, keep me right in spite of all temptations, and will not suffer me to protract my absence one day beyond what necessity requires.

LETTER IV.

Leave Ooroomia.—Koordish Costume and Weapons.—Dusht-e-Beel.—Ugly Customers.—Koordish Mountains.—Plain of Ooshnoo.—Sumud Khan and his Establishment.—Antiquity of the Koords—compared with the Highland Clans.—State of the Country.—A Disappointment.—Ooshnoo—Depopulation of.—Buffaloes—their Usefulness.—Koords on Horseback.—Fishing.—Singular Mode of catching Quails.—Leave Ooshnoo.—Blood Feuds.—Suggerân Seyeds.—Negotiations for safe Conduct.—Success in Fishing.—Koords at Prayer.—Kara Papâks and Bilbâs Koords.—Threatening Appearances.—Bustards.—Churlish Repulse.—Retreat to a Caravanserai.—A hospitable Koord.—A Disappointment.—Piscatory Adventures.

Ooshnoo, 21st October, 1834.

If you seek, dear ——, to find the place of my present abode in any map you are likely to have within reach, you will seek it in vain. But if this find you in London, and you should have the means of getting sight of Monteith's map of Azerbijân, &c. you may see it laid down about thirty-five miles S.S.W. of Ooroomia, and to the west of Lake Shahee, that is in the very heart of Koordistan.

On the 19th I took leave of Ooroomia and its very interesting neighbourhood, as well as of its kind and polite chief; but that day we only marched twelve miles, taking up our abode at a small village of the Khan's, where we were still entertained as

his guests. We were lodged in a large building of mud, used as a mosque, and were well entertained by the chief people of the village, so far as eatables were concerned; but I never passed a more sleepless night. Some how or other I awoke after a couple of hours' nap, and got into a train of thought that kept me wakeful. Then came a concert of dogs, baying the moon, which lasted two full hours. Then the labourers of the village, who attend to the irrigation of the rice grounds, assembled behind the mosque just at my head, and struck up a clattering and laughing that might have wakened the seven sleepers. By the time they went off, it was about time to think of going too; but I did fall into that sort of doze in which our dreams are the most vivid, and I had a dream—a dream of home. I had returned —I saw you all, and fain would have mingled with you; but there was an obstacle—I could not tell what—and there were . . . . remonstrating with me, and I was still striving to approach with a force and vividness of feeling, that was little short of reality, when in came the people to tell me they were loading, and all vanished, leaving me in the cold dim mosque, to rise for a cold ride, for the wind blew fiercely from some hills on the right, which still were flecked with large patches of snow.

Our path, this day, led up a narrow but cultivated country, plunging into the very heart of the Koordish mountains, amongst which we soon found ourselves, and every moment were met and passed by parties of wild-looking Koords, with their fine flowing garments and long slender spears. The

dress of these people is by far the most picturesque I have seen, with the exception of some few among the Turkish costumes: indeed, the word "picturesque," applies better to it than to any Turkish dress I know. On their head they wear a large shawl of striped silk, red, white, and blue, with fringed ends, which is wound in the most graceful manner round their red skull-cap. Its ample folds are confined with some sort of band, and the long fringes hang down with a rich fantastic wildness; their true Saracenic features, and bright black eyes, gleam with peculiar lustre from under this head-tire. Their body garments consist of a sort of ample vest and gown, with magnificent wide Turkish sleeves, over which is worn a jacket, often richly embroidered and furred, according to the owner's rank. Their lower man is enveloped in ample *shulwars*, not unlike those of the Mamlucs, into which, in riding, they stuff the skirts of their more flowing garments. Around their waist, instead of a shawl, they wear a girdle fastened with monstrous silver clasps, which may be ornamented according to the owner's taste with jewels, and in which they stick, not only their Koordish dagger, but a pair of great brass or silver-knobbed pistols. From this, too, hang sundry powder-horns and shot-cases, cartridge-boxes, &c. and over all they cast a sort of cloak, or *abba*, of camel's hair, white, or black, or striped, white, brown, and black, clasped on the breast, and floating picturesquely behind. When riding they carry a small round shield depending from the left shoulder, and grasp in their hand a long slender spear. If in

war-time, and they are going on an expedition, in addition to these arms they carry a gun, and occasionally three slender javelins in a case, which they can throw with great precision to the distance of thirty yards. Then they case themselves in armour, like knights of old, either in a shirt of linked mail, such as those in the hall at ——, with helmet and armlets, or with a suit of plate-armour, called *Char-Eineh*, consisting of four plates of inlaid and Damasked steel, made to fit back, breast, and sides, and which are a defence against anything but a ball striking them directly. From this sketch of Koordish costume, you will comprehend that it is worth seeing, and that the groups that passed us, ever and anon, were in good harmony with the scenery, and well calculated to awaken interest and fix attention; but as for the costume, I hope you will be enabled to judge for yourself, as I mean to procure a complete dress, which may serve some day for a fancy ball at home.

After breakfasting beside the stream, which we were following up to its head, we continued on till we reached a wide level, or table-land called the *Dusht-e-Beel*, where the waters separated and ran to either side the ridge; and, leaving the regular road, we struck over this high flat, which was inhabited, we understood, by Eeliaut Koords of a very fierce and lawless character. The path we followed, it seems, was both shorter and better than the regular one we had quitted, but is seldom preferred on account of these same Eeliauts, who make no ceremony about stripping and plundering all whom they are

able to overpower. While we were listening to this account from our guide, who bade us fear nothing under his protection, I observed six stout fellows in the Koordish dress, but on foot, appear on the brow of a little height, and reconnoitre us with a very suspicious air. Our guide immediately rode forwards to them; and, after a few words had passed, they all came forwards and made their graceful salute, while their leader, an old man, laid his hands upon his eyes, as much as to say, "you have brought light to these, and are as dear to me as them," and proffered all manner of services and welcomes. The old villain! but for the presence of our guide and our own obvious strength, he would have scrupled as little at possessing himself of our effects and knocking us on the head, as if we had been so many jackals; but a single guide, not to speak of our fire-arms, made them all our humble slaves. On we fared; and, descending a very rugged and steep ravine, in which ran a fine clear stream, we saw beneath us the fine valley or basin of Ooshnoo, stretching from fourteen to fifteen miles or more each way, in length and breadth, studded with villages and backed by the magnificent chain of Mount Zagros, the backbone of Koordistan, and indeed of this part of Asia, which stretches from the knot of mountains in Armenia where the Tigris and Euphrates take their rise, to the Bukhtiaree mountains that run past Ispahan, and passing through Fars, unite with those of Kermân and Mekrân. It was a fine lofty ridge, spotted plentifully with snow, and, I should conjecture very roughly, not less than

from eight to ten thousand feet high above the level of the sea; but the loftiest knot of the chain, that of Jewâr, the habitation of the Nestorians, lay hid from us to the west. It was a noble sight—a fertile theme for thought and speculation—but the hours of daylight were passing away, and we were forced to haste towards the town, or rather large village of Ooshnoo, which we reached just as the sun sank behind the lofty peaks of granite, and where we were received by Sumud Khan, chief of the place and tribe of Zerzaw, with all possible kindness and hospitality.

Ooshnoo, the first truly Koordish abode I have been domiciliated in, differed not externally from other Persian villages; but the costume of its inhabitants imparted to its interior a character which no Persian village could present. The Khan himself was habited in the common Persian garb, which, I observe, is adopted by all men of rank, whatever their tribe or country, who have seen something of the world, in the same manner as our Highland Lairds, now-a-days, leave the kilt and the tartan to their followers or clan, and seldom affect the singularity of wearing it, unless upon some particular occasion. The whole of his household and all the other inhabitants, however, retained the Koordish costume, with all their native wildness, and stood gazing at the stranger as if he were a man of other mould than they—*other* I say, not *better;* for no Celtish Laird or loon can think more highly of himself, his family, or his clan, than did these Koords of their blood and tribe; and certainly, so far as

antiquity has claims to regard, they have good title to consideration; for they are probably the descendants of those who flourished in the days of Cyrus and Xenophon, of Julian and Heraclius, and just as proud, independent, and thievish as they. In fact, the similarity between these Koords, as they *are*, and the highland clans as they *were*, not many centuries ago, is wonderfully strong. They are as devotedly attached to their mountains as any Scotch or Swiss highlanders for their lives can be. Like the first, they are divided into clans and septs, acknowledging the supremacy of chiefs, who are regarded with as much devotion and followed with the same blind zeal, and all on the same grounds, protection and kindness in return for fealty and service. They are proud, haughty, and overbearing, exactly in proportion to their ignorance, and, like our highlanders of old, despise more or less all arts but those of war and plunder—all professions but that of arms. They have their feuds with their neighbours, and make *raids* on the poor industrious lowlander; and woe betides him who should attempt to "ascend the pass of Ballybrugh," or enter the "country" of any Koordish "Donald Bean Lean," without guide and safe conduct. The same love of enterprise and plunder has been inherent in both, each nation has been stained by like atrocities and fearful instances of revenge, and has been famed for the profession, and generally for the practice of hospitality,—the same professed regard for word once pledged—for the sanctity of the promise of protection. But the parallel stops here, for certainly

the character of "highland hospitality" is deservedly far higher than the *practice* of it, at this day, among the Koords; and I cannot assuredly recollect in highland story any such infamous instances of treachery, of violation of the sacred character of host towards his guest, on the most frivolous pretexts, such breaches of the *spirit* of a promise while the *letter* was kept, as have occurred in Koordistan.

With regard to myself, however, on this occasion I had no cause to complain. A short time saw me fairly lodged in a comfortable chamber, not so superb as my quarters at Ooroomia, but clean and warm, in which I was soon in conference with Sumud Khan, regarding the state of the country generally, but especially as relating to the affairs of Rewandooz. The result of this conversation was conclusive on the subject of my projected visit to the chief of that place. To proceed in it would be folly; I found that the condition of the country was such as even to compel me to relinquish a lesser project, of the success of which I had hitherto entertained no doubts. I had been informed that at the top of a pass on the road to Rewandooz, some sixteen or twenty miles from Ooshnoo, there was to be seen a stone pillar inscribed with writing in some language unknown to any of the people of the country; and the desire of seeing what might have proved a very interesting monument, would have induced me to brave any reasonable risk to be incurred in getting at it. But the Khan assured me that it would be the height of madness to attempt it; that but a few days before, a caravan

proceeding to Rewandooz, had been plundered by the Bilbâs, and that nothing short of a very powerful party could venture on that road, and such a party he could not supply me with. By way of alleviating my disappointment, I suppose, he informed me that a gentleman, whom I take to be the unfortunate Schultz, had some time ago actually gone to see the stone, and on his return had declared the inscriptions to be illegible from age and defacement, but that they related only to matters of boundary between the two countries, and *had nothing to do with concealed treasure.* Whether or not this inconsistent tale were entirely a fabrication of the Khan's to prevent me from further pressing the point, I cannot determine; but it was easy to see how his own ideas pointed, and therefore, as it would have been dangerous, if not impossible to achieve the adventure without his good will, I gave it up with a good grace, hoping that some other traveller more fortunate, and with more time at his command than myself, may soon decide what this monument of antiquity really is.

Next morning I took a stroll about the town, or rather on the heights above it, and a pretty place it looked, surrounded with a large extent of orchards just tinged with red and yellow by the autumnal tints. Ooshnoo some years ago contained, they say, five thousand families; but "the plague" and "the Kajars," these two desolaters of Irân, have sadly reduced its numbers. Four thousand individuals were swept off by the former, and the latter have occasioned an almost general emigration from the

valley. I must observe, however, that the Koords are a race who willingly would pay tax or duty to neither King nor Kajars, and who esteem the exaction of either the height of tyranny; so that if the tyranny of the Kajars rested solely on their report, it would assuredly require confirmation. Unfortunately this is not the case, and the short-sighted folly of a race, who seem incapable of suiting their measures of government to the exigencies of the occasion, and the feelings and peculiarities of the people to be governed, is the more to be lamented, as it compromises the happiness and prosperity of the nation. Were the present reigning family, for instance, to take the trouble of conciliating these tribes — from whom it is difficult to wrest anything by force — and to offer the slenderest encouragement in the way of pay, they might command, by a comparatively trifling concession, and small outlay, an almost unlimited number of hardy horsemen and *toffunchees*, who, in an emergency, would be sure to turn the scale in their favour against any opponent.

With its population, the productiveness of Ooshnoo has of course greatly decreased. The town has still about three thousand families, they say, — I should not believe near so many, — and the valley about twelve thousand; but the cultivation is greatly reduced. What I took for stubble-fields proved, on approach, to be meadows of dry grass; and a few green spots here and there marked the small proportion of wheat, which was to form the following harvest. I remarked that buffaloes are a good deal

employed on this side of Lake Shahee; and here they appear to supersede the use of all other animals for purposes of agriculture. They plough, they drag carts, they carry loads, they give milk, they are killed and eaten; and, I must say, that where water is not scarce, they appear to me the most useful domestic animal possible. They are far stronger than bullocks, and not less docile, and they carry full as great a load as a good camel, while their keep is not more expensive than, and their milk is nearly if not quite as good as, that of the cow. It is true that they cannot do without water, and that, like the water-spaniel, whenever they come to a pool they are apt to lie down in it, to the great detriment of loads and discomfort of drivers or riders. The other day I saw a pair of them coming along, ridden each by a Koord; a pool of black mud lay in their path, and down they both lay, as if by mutual consent, nearly smothering their two gay riders before they could disengage themselves. But on the previous day I witnessed a wonderful proof of the strength and sagacity of the creatures. Four of them were dragging a heavy-loaded cart through a perfect slough; the foremost pair had reached the firm earth of its margin, but, instinctively aware that if they clambered up to the elevated bank they would lose their power of draught, they actually knelt upon it, and continued dragging on their knees until the latter pair, or wheelers, had also got to terra firma. They then rose; and, both uniting their forces, tugged the cart out of the mire. The price

of these useful creatures runs here from thirty shillings to two pounds each.

Both yesterday and to-day I rode out in the forenoon with the Khan's son, a fine youth, professedly to fish the river, which winds through the Ooshnoo valley; but, in reality, to have an opportunity of observing something more of my Koordish friends, and inquiring into their manners and customs. It was an animating sight to see the young fellows, who accompanied us, careering along the plain at speed, as free, it seemed, as the beasts they chased, winding and turning their well-trained horses as they went through their spear-exercise to amuse me. Truly yon mounted Koord, as he flies along as steady as a rock upon the spirited little animal he bestrides, is a gallant object; his splendid turban gleaming in the sun, his wide mantle floating away behind him, and the long slender spear quivering like a reed as he shakes his bare arm, the loose sleeves of his tunic and jacket waving like streamers in the wind. I assure you that as a dozen of these wildly picturesque figures were careering around us, I felt myself and my three or four Kuzzilbashes, in our sober garbs, cut but a sorry figure. On they would come up to your very breast, their keen steel spear-points glittering like sparks of lightning, when a swerve of their arm, or their body, imperceptible to you, would send them just clear of you, to wheel round with the speed of thought upon the other flank. It was a delightful representation of the admirably described combat between the Scottish knight and

the Saracen warrior at the "Diamond of the Desert," which opens that delightful tale "The Talisman," and strange enough it seemed, to find one's self amidst the very people there described.

We had little sport in fishing, but a great deal of fun and laughing; for the Koords were too impatient to endure the slow and quiescent process of luring the fish with the bait. The Khan's son, so soon as he saw a shoal of them darting about in the still water, spurred his horse at them, spear in hand, as he would have done at a Bilbâs or a Kuzzilbash, if his foe, shouting out "Ah-ah! ah-ah! look at them! look at them!" and chasing them hither and thither as if he could have caught them by speed of foot. Then all the party dashed into the water girth-deep, splashing, and poking, and shouting out to me to look at the fish—to come here or there—here was the place to catch them—here were the large ones. It was in vain to attempt explaining that all my art lay in quietly enticing the fish to feed — that success depended entirely on perfect stillness, and keeping out of sight of the water. There they would all stand or ride along the banks, or sit upon them, striking with their spears at the fish as they darted by, till a hand-net that had been sent for was brought, when I gladly put up my rod and tackle and looked on, laughing at the childish delight with which the *Khanzadeh* (Khan's son) saw each fish that was entangled in the net taken out of the water. Nor was his delight less on the second day, when, the net having failed of success, I found a pool in which they could not ride, and

succeeded in hooking and landing several tolerable fish.

At length the rod broke, and there was an end of the fishing, but not of the sport; for we next rode across the country after quails and ducks—anything that afforded an object, or excuse, for a chase, now and then putting up a grand bustard by way of variety; and I was made acquainted with a curious enough way they have of catching quails, and which I do not remember to have seen described. A man, choosing a place where they abound, spreads a net upon the grass or stubble, in such a manner that the birds can run *into* but not *through* it; and then, taking his cloak, he spreads it above his head by means of two sticks, in such a fashion as to double in appearance his natural size and stature. Thus disguised, he goes poking along until he sees a quail upon the ground, when, bending forward, he drives it before him, and the spectre-like hood he carries, overshadowing the creature, so terrifies it, that it does not dare to take wing, but keeps running forward; a movement of the hood to one side or other serves to direct the course of the unfortunate bird, which soon runs right under the net, and is caught. In this odd manner a great many quails are taken, and one may see dozens of men with their cloaks stuck over their heads, in the manner I have described, employed on a fine evening in the fields at this pastime.

October 22. — This morning I despatched a messenger to the Meer of Rewandooz with the Envoy's letter and presents, and a letter from my-

self, explaining the reason of my not proposing to present them in person, and expressing my great regret at the want of time which deprived me of the opportunity of paying my respects to a chief of his celebrity. This piece of duty being performed, and having breakfasted, I took leave of our good host, and quitted the place with feelings of great kindness to all of its inhabitants with whom I had come in contact, and pleased with the country, as well as with our entertainment. I have some reason to hope and believe these feelings were reciprocal—perhaps they were a little aided on the part of my friends by some trifling remembrancers, in the shape of presents, which it seemed good to me to bestow.

Our first stage was a short one. The good folks of these countries, who themselves set no value upon time, and consider ease and enjoyment as the only true ends of life, if you leave them to fix the stages of your journey, will, assuredly, not distress you by their length; and the first is always particularly short. But there was another reason, as it appeared, for the Khan's fixing my first day's munzil, on this occasion, at a village only nine or ten miles from Ooshnoo: it was the last in his country, and separated from the neighbouring district of Sooldooz only by a little rising ground. A portion of the Bilbâs tribe occupied that part of the Sooldooz district, and with them his clan had a blood-feud. When, therefore, the guide he gave me reached the village in question—Humza Hussan, I think, was its name,—he signified to me that either I

must remain there all night, and get fresh guides for the morrow, or wait until he should procure from a certain Seyed, who was Lord of the Village, a pledge of safety for himself, to insure him free ingress and regress from the inimical country.

You are to understand that all individuals of that order of Seyeds, called *Suggerân*,— that is, who can boast of an indisputable descent from the daughter of the prophet in the *male* line, untainted by less holy blood, are held by the Koords, as well as the Toorkomans, in especial reverence. Not only are their own persons exempt from violence, but the protection they extend to others is respected. Nay, should any one, whose life is forfeit as a murderer, either in his own person or that of his kindred, be on the eve of execution, he must be released at the request of such a holy person. They grant effectual safe-conducts, and frequently become the means of intercourse between hostile tribes when all other is interdicted. The chief of the village, where I was this night to lodge, was one of these Seyeds, and it was therefore understood to be in his power to grant the needful safe-conduct, if he chose; but it appeared that he made difficulties. Perhaps he knew that the feud was a fierce one, and did not choose to risk compromising a power, which, like all conventional authority, is liable to break down if put to too rude a test, or perhaps he desired to secure for himself the profits of guidance; for after some thoughts and looks, in which I knew not whether annoyance or self-sufficiency predominated, he told me, "I must go with you myself—these

people are not to be trusted; and if anything were to befall you, I should have to answer for it." I replied, "Of course, whatever you say is right; but I would not wish to put you to so much trouble;" and, rather alarmed at a proof of attention which prognosticated a serious attack upon the purse, I contrived to get the office of guide deputed to his brother, who, though no small man in his own esteem, was not likely to refuse the offer of money in however moderate a form it might be made.

These knotty points being settled, and the day as yet little spent, I resolved to try my luck at the river in a quieter and more private fashion than on the two last days, as I was persuaded that sport was to be had if sought after in a proper way. Privacy, however, was unattainable. The moment my intentions were comprehended, every man and child in the village, young boys and grey beards, high and low, flocked out to see the fun; but I contrived, by means of my old guide, to keep some order, and, to the great delight of all, succeeded in landing some very fine fish, among which was one of at least four pounds weight: I do not know their kind; but, though too full of bones, they were by no means despicable food. For the benefit of my sporting friends, be it known, that they were taken with worm, and the best of them in the back-water of a smart stream.

Our lodging, as usual, was in the mosque of the place, which seems to do duty, in these parts, for a *mehman-khaneh*, or guest-chamber; and it was interesting in the evening to see these rude Koords

assembling at the call of the Muezzin, and lifting up their voices together as the Peishnumâz gave forth the prescribed form of prayer. I sought not to know how many, or how few, might follow the call from the heart, but the sound had something in it solemn and soothing, and I gave credit to those who uttered it, for a sincerity which may only be questioned by Him from whom no secrets are hid.

In the morning, after being detained as usual for our guides, we sallied forth, and soon crossed the dangerous barrier of Sooldooz. In this fine, rich, well-watered district, which has an extent of twenty miles by sixteen, chiefly of fertile flat land, are found settled the remains of two broken tribes of Koords, the *Kara Papâks* and the *Bilbâs*, of which it would be difficult to determine which are the most desperate thieves. The former tribe were brought from Erivan by the late Prince Royal, as I think, about the close of the late Russian war, to this—one of the fairest districts of his government, where, however, as I am informed, they still think much more of stealing and plundering than of cultivating their productive lands. The Bilbâs are a portion of the poor remains of one of the most turbulent and fierce, though also one of the bravest, of the Koordish tribes, that have fallen greatly into decay of late years. Their daring attacks upon their neighbours, particularly on the side of Ooroomia and Maragha, roused the wrath of the late Prince Royal, who, by the help of a chief of Maragha, inveigled them from their strongholds, and seized and put to death many of their leading men. Their

103175

discomfiture was completed by the Meer of Rewandooz, who, exasperated at their fickle and treacherous habits, sometimes pillaging his territories, and sometimes professing obedience in order to obtain his protection, at last attacked and carried off the greater part of the *Mammish* division of the tribe, as prisoners, to Rewandooz. Not less than forty of the heads of the principal families were in chains there when the plague broke out; and, as almost every one fled from the place except their keepers, they conceived it a good opportunity to make their escape. Accordingly, whether by the connivance of these keepers or not, they did escape from prison; but so strict is the Meer's police, that none of the villagers would venture to give them protection, and the most of them were arrested and sent to the great man, who put every one of them to death, without exception or ceremony, including in the execution those who had had the charge of them at Rewandooz, and all who were believed to have assisted in the escape of such as got off. The poor remains of the Mammish are now principally settled in Sooldooz—a few are said to live in Balek, a mountainous district belonging to the Meer, and in Lahijân, a fine large plain lying westward of Souje Bulâgh. The whole tribe, including its three divisions, *Mammish*, *Menkoor*, and *Peeraun*, are reduced, it is said, to less than two thousand families, the greater portion of whom acknowledge the Meer's authority; but a considerable number still exist, unapproachable in their wild haunts, and intangible from the facility with which they can

remove from the bounds of one jurisdiction to another—a terror to all their more peaceable neighbours.

The first village of Sooldooz, through which we passed, was tenanted by a certain number of families of these same Mammish, and, certainly, as they issued forth at our approach, from the crypts of their underground cells, congregating on the tops of some of the houses which commanded the road, their aspect was anything but pacific or agreeable. Big and little, laird and loon, forward they came, their swords girt on, their ready spears in hand, the red beards of the elders vying with their gallant turbans, and the black eyes of the younkers gleaming like those of snakes at the thought, or the hopes, of mischief. Even the beldame females loured a threat upon us, which reminded me of the farewell of the crones of "Aberfoil" to the English party when quitting the "clachan" to proceed up the glen, as related in "Rob Roy." And no doubt the cloud would have emitted some of its thunder as we passed but for the presence of our Seyed; at his word their fierce looks and "questions high" were turned into "*Khoosh-âmedeeds*" and "*Balachesh'ms*,"—"you are very welcome—upon our eyes be your safety," and such like salutations; and on we fared harmless in the midst of evil.

It would have vexed the heart of a duller sportsman than I flatter myself I can yet be esteemed, to see the flocks of noble bustards that frequent these fine plains rising around us, actually in hundreds, from the dry pasture of the meadows, like crows

from off a piece of fresh-ploughed land, and sailing harmlessly away, without our having the power of forcing any of them to stop; but neither time nor place was suited to delay. We could not linger in a place where even our guide showed symptoms of uneasiness, and we had thirty long miles between us and our night's lodging; but I did make one effort to get a shot at the creatures. As I had no time to stalk them *secundum artem*, I watched two or three that had lighted on a bit of stubble,—rode slowly towards them as far as I dared, then pushed my horse at them full speed, got pretty close before they could get their heavy bodies on the wing, and fired, but was not so fortunate as to bring any of them down.

It was near sunset ere we descended into the deep valley, near the top of which, on a fine stream, lies the nice town of Souje Bulâgh. I had sent forward a man to deliver my letters of introduction, and to secure me lodgings; but there awaited me, on arriving, a specimen of the manner in which these matters are managed in Persia, which I was not prepared to expect—I say in Persia, for I must do Koordistan the justice to say, that in no other place within its bounds have I met with the like. A mounted Gholaum was sent by Moossa Khan, the Naib, or lieutenant-governor of the place, in absence of Abdoolla Khan, its governor, to welcome and take me to a lodging; and, accordingly, he did take me to the house of one Abbas Aga, a rich man of the place, it seems, where guests are often lodged. The rooms were lighted up in an inviting manner, as we

approached, and preparations for the reception of guests were obviously in progress. But that these guests were not *us*, we very soon found out; for, on our halting at the gate, one or two grand-looking Koordish servants came up and told our Gholaum to go about his business, for that there was no room for any more guests, so that we could not be received. A very unseemly altercation then took place, to terminate which I turned to the man who seemed the chief of our opponents, assured him that the intrusion was none of my seeking, and that I would far rather lie in the street than enter a house where, instead of welcome, I had met with such an inhospitable rebuff; and then I told my servant to lead the way to the next caravanserai. "The caravanserais are all full," said some one; "you will get no room there: half the pilgrims of the caravan for Kerbelah have taken up their quarters on the river banks." —"Very well," replied I; "there will I go also, if need be."—"No, no," roared the Gholaum, "let your servant go with me to Moossa Khan; we shall soon settle these gentlemen's business."—"Go where you please," replied I; "but to this house I return not, be the consequence what it may." So off they went, and I sat upon my horse, waiting, not very patiently, for the arrival of my messengers — a spectacle to all the gaping Koords whom idleness gathered round us.

For full half an hour did I remain in this unpleasant predicament, despatching one man after another to trace out my "corbie messengers," and when at length they did return it was with an

increased force, and a still stronger order to provide us an abode in the same house of Abbas Aga, from whence they had been just expelled. We still stood near the gate, and I saw a battle royal commencing; on the one hand the Khan's men, on the other the Aga's servants, and some stout blows were given and taken; but I would not stay to witness the result, and calling to my own people, bade them find out the nearest caravanserai. Thither we went, leaving the combatants to settle the affair as they pleased.

At the caravanserai, admittance was, as I anticipated, refused; but I also knew the power of money; and the promise of a reward, joined to a knowledge of who we were, gained me, first entrance, and then a sort of chamber, in which we were bestowing ourselves and our goods, when a bustle was heard at the gate, and two good-looking Koords, followed by a host of others, entering, came up to me, and said. "What are you thinking of doing here?—you are my guests—my house is prepared for you."—"What!" said I, "the house from which I was so unceremoniously thrust? no, thank you, I'll none of it; I find myself marvellously well here." "No, no," replied they, "not that house—nothing to do with it,—this (pointing to the principal person) is the *Darogha* (magistrate) of the town, he has just heard of your arrival, and has come to pay you his respects." "Very much obliged to the Darogha," said I, bowing to him, "but I am quite well where I am; I want no better lodging." "No," said the Darogha, "that

can't be. Listen to me, I did not know of your arrival, or I should have been here sooner. Now, either cut my head off, (suiting the action to the word by pointing to his throat,) or go with me to my house. Do not dishonour me by a refusal." I still hesitated, and indeed was exceedingly sorry to be disturbed, as it would be necessary to reload all our baggage; but my friend, the Darogha, insisted so vehemently, that I saw persisting in refusal would give great offence, so I consented, and taking up my traps, walked off with my friends, who, it being now quite dark, insisted on holding me up on either side, lest I should stumble, as we walked through a succession of crooked and winding alleys, to the apartments prepared for me.

This turned out to be in the Darogha's own *dewan-khaneh*, or that of Azeez Beg his brother, and which, as such, was open to all the Koordish brothers of the place: and even this very night, late as it was, before all had been arranged, a number came in to stare at and ask questions about the stranger guest. These questions, however, being chiefly in Koordish, which I could not understand, the time passed wearily enough until the desultory confabulation was put a stop to by the entrance of a dinner-tray, with a good pillaw and sundry savoury adjuncts, to which I was disposed to do all possible justice. This having been terminated, my hosts, concluding I might be ready for repose, left me to enjoy as much of it as was to be obtained on the well-peopled floor of this public saloon.

Next morning I was prevented from sallying

forth to view the lions of the place, by an expectation, which was generally entertained, of the arrival of Abdoollah Khan, governor of the town, lately appointed by the Prince Royal, and chief of the Mookree tribe of Koords, of whom this town is the head quarters. A grand peshwâz or procession was prepared to meet him; all had mounted to go forth from the town, and as the entry of a Koordish chief into his government promised to be interesting, I resolved to see it. But we were doomed to disappointment, for the Khan sent to say he was unavoidably detained, and should not enter before the morrow. The day thus broken, and having amused my new friends with all I had to show them; detonating fire-arms, lucifers, Prometheans, and all, I went out in the afternoon to look at the gardens above the town, and took with me my rod, to try the river, which was full of fish. That such an exhibition could interest my grave and respectable hosts, I never dreamed; but to my surprise, who should propose to be my guide to the best pools but the long-bearded Azeez Beg himself, who, as we passed through the town, picked up a very gallant tail of worthy Seignors, and great was the anxiety that sat on each man's brow as my preparations went on. Their delight was not less marked when, after a few throws, I brought up a fine fish which flapped its tail almost in the face of a most vinegar-mouthed one-eyed Moollah. The Moollah growled and withdrew; but the rest closed in around me, and dinned me with their various opinions, of which were the best pools, and where

the fish were the most plentiful. Koords, however, are not Isaac Waltons, and I found my own experience of more value, in the piscatory line, than theirs; the day's sport producing for my host a very good dish of handsome-looking fish. Nor was it altogether barren of other adventures. In seeking after a choice bit of stream, which I had remarked curling under some willow bushes, I came plump upon a fine bevy of Koordish damsels, who had retired thither to "lave their beauteous limbs," and who were at that moment clothed much in the original dress of mother Eve. I had observed the men avoiding the spot, and one of them made signs to me to do the same, but I understood him not, and thus fell plump into the scrape, and almost into the pool; for I must say that the discomfiture of the fair ones was scarcely equal to my own. There was a little squalling and huddling together, and one or two plumped into the water, while others tried to shuffle on a pair of inexpressibles, or get hold of some convenient garment; but there was more laughing than anything else, and they all took a good glance at the intruder, who, on his part, in order to avoid the fate of Acteon, or anything resembling it, took himself off as fast as he could. As for the men, they appeared by far more amused than displeased at the accident.

LETTER V.

The Khan's Arrival.—His Lineage.—Condition of the Koords.—Over Taxation.—A Battle Royal, and a choice Morsel.—My Hosts.—Domestic Manners of the Koords—of the Great—of the Ladies.—Discrepancy of Reports.—Leave Souje Bulâgh.—Beirâm.—Obstinacy of Guards.—Hussun Aga.—Face of the Country.—Pass of Soonâs and Descent.—Nistân.—Village evening Meal.—Aspect of Mountains and Ride to Seradusht.—Abdool-Sumud Khan.—Scarcity of Grain.—Magnificent Scenery.—Ascent of Hoomeel.—Ford the Aksu.—Akoorta.—Bivouac.—Autumnal Tints.—Burying Grounds.—Nezer-Kerdehs.—Koordish Superstitions.—Plain of Suleimania.

October 26. — Yesterday, after a world of waiting, the Khan came in. It was, on the whole, an interesting sight, though not so brilliant as I had anticipated. About a thousand horsemen entered with the Khan, accompanying him from a distance of several miles. As the cavalcade approached the city, the horsemen began to show off their horses and skill, and you constantly saw cavaliers issuing forth full tilt "like lightning from the thunder-cloud" from the veil of dust which wrapped the main body, shaking their spears, and wheeling and turning with a rapidity which was imposing at least if not absolutely astonishing. It was when the wind occasionally blew aside the cloud of dust, that you could distinguish the gallant appoint-

ments and the fine horses of those who formed the pith of the cavalcade. The Khan himself, clothed in the dress of honour bestowed on him by the Prince, and which formed his investiture of the government of Souje Bulâgh, sat erect upon a fine Arab charger. This dress of honour, a shawl-cloak embroidered with silver, cost the chief, some say three, others six, thousand tomâns, or half as many pounds sterling; from whence it may be inferred that to be governor of such a province is no bad thing. On the whole, it was a sight worth seeing, and assuredly superior to anything seen at the inferior or provincial courts, more glittering perhaps than the *cortége* of the Shah himself, on any but great occasions; for be it remembered that the whole male population of Souje Bulâgh went forth, clad in their best, to meet this *cortége*, and the women mustered in force, upon the house-tops, to see it pass by.

Abdoolla Khan, present governor of Souje Bulâgh, is the head of the Koordish tribe of *Mookree*, one of the most powerful as well as ancient of that aboriginal people. He is son to the well-known Boodha Khan, who was treacherously blinded by Mahomed Koolee Khan of Ooroomia, as you may read in one of the volumes of Blackwood, (for the year '25 or '26, I think,) in our friend ——'s "Visits to the Harem." Boodha Khan used, when need was, to ride to the "trysting-place," with his thousand horse "armed in proof." But these days are passed; the Koordish tribes nearest the seat of government, have by force, or treachery, or domestic disputes, been constrained to yield an unwilling obedience to

the ruling power, and the Mookrees now pay tax and tribute for the lands where their fathers roamed free, unheeding of Shah or Shahzadeh. This change of condition sits ill on all of them, and many and bitter were the complaints which I heard of the misery to which the present heavy rate of taxation has reduced the people. "In the days of Aga Mahomed Khan," said Baba Khan Beg to me, "Souje Bulâgh was assessed at 1000 tomâns. Now, with the district of Seradusht, it pays 25,000 to the King, and we (meaning the chief and his family) are forced to extract 10,000 more for ourselves, in order to keep up the necessary appearance; no wonder the people are poor and discontented. The plague has swept away more than half, and the remaining half are forced to do the work of all, and pay the whole assessment. Nay, since this coming and going of the army to and from Suleimania we pay 10,000 more in *Soursaut* and *Mehmandaree*, (supplies of provisions and maintenance of guests,) how are we to stand it?"

I happened to commend the *abba*, or Arab cloak, commonly worn here, as a dress conveniently suited either to warm or cool weathers. "Ay!" replied Azeez Khan; "but the abba is not our regular dress, it is an adoption of recent days. We get them from Baghdad, or make them here now. They are cheap, and we are poor. Formerly no one ever dared to appear in the presence of a great man without a handsome cloak of broad cloth; but now, go to the Khan's *dewan-khaneh*, and nothing but abbas will you see."

There is no doubt that much of this grumbling

proceeds from the discontented feelings natural to men who, once free of master and of impost, have been, by force, saddled with both; but I do believe that the people are by far too heavily taxed, and still more, that the demands of government are collected in a very oppressive manner: and I am convinced that it would not only be just, but politic, to lighten their burthens.—They are a people accustomed to little beyond necessaries, so that the difference to them of a very small increase or decrease of taxation is that of mere suffering, or actual starvation; and it is painful to see a race, who have many qualities to recommend them, ground to the dust by exaction, or forced to emigrate in order to preserve their miserable lives.

On the evening of the Khan's return, I was witness to one incident which, were I inclined to strain matters for the purpose of supporting my opinions, I might have quoted as a proof of poverty and want of actual food among the people, though I have no doubt it was rather attributable to the natural grossness of Koordish manners. On the entry of great men into their abodes or governments in Persia, it is customary to bring sheep, or even oxen, into the road by which he must pass, and sacrifice them, by cutting off their heads at the moment of his approach. An unfortunate cow which, to judge by appearances, had its natural demise but little anticipated by the process of summary decapitation, underwent this ceremony on the Khan's arrival, and close to his own house. The Khan ordered the carcass to be given to the dervishes, of whom a great number had joined

the procession; but the townsfolk, considering this as rather an infringement on their right, arose and went forth to do battle for the choice morsel. They attacked the dervishes, who manfully defended their prize, and there was a battle-royal. Victory, for some time doubtful, at length declared for the right. The dervishes, armed with their heavy iron-shod sticks, laid about them so valiantly that the others gave in, and, seeing no hope for themselves, endeavoured to destroy the subject of their contention in order that their adversaries might have no benefit from their conquest,—so they threw dust and dirt of all sorts on the carcass, already more resembling carrion than meat. But the dervishes, like the heroes of the Greeks and Romans contending over bodies of the slain, at length rescued their prey; and in this way did I see the disgusting mass dragged along the filthy street.

"What can they do with it now they have got it?" said I to the Darogha, as we stood looking at the strange scene. "Surely they can't eat it?"

"Not eat it!" said Baba Khan Beg; "they would eat its father. You don't know the Koords—they are beasts; these dervishes are all Koords, and in two hours there won't be a morsel of that old cow left undevoured."

However strange or untoward the origin of my acquaintance with my hosts, or however compulsory or otherwise their hospitality to me at its commencement, it is certain that the one became more pleasant and the other more cordial every hour of my

stay. The stiffness of first intercourse with a stranger changed speedily into a comfortable ease and confiding openness, and I got from them a great deal of information regarding the history of the tribe and the manners and customs of the Koords. Azeez Beg and Baba Khan Beg were near relations of Abdoolla Khan their chief, in fact, cousins, sons of a brother of Boodha Khan, and of course held high rank in the place. They therefore had not only much influence in the tribe, but an extensive acquaintance; and their house, that is, the dewankhaneh where I lodged, was a rendezvous for all, both of country and city. This did not add much to privacy or comfort, but it brought before my eyes a sort of peristreptic panorama of the country, which made me more familiar than I could otherwise have been with its inhabitants.

In a community so closely resembling that of the highland clans, it was interesting to observe the demeanour observed towards relatives and friends, and to trace the respective degrees of estimation assigned to various grades of kindred or connexions. The mode of reception to each was varied and accurately defined, but the manner was kind and polite to all. The masters of the house yielded place to all visitors of equal or superior rank, but the arrangement of giving and taking places appeared to me to be conducted upon a kinder principle than reigns in the same ceremonial in Persia. It was obvious that precedence was not yielded to riches alone, for I observed several persons of mean figure and

shabby apparel admitted to a high place in the assembly.

When a friend or relative arrived from the country, the heads of the family went to the door, or beyond it, to embrace him—the sons or nephews had probably given the first welcome when he dismounted: if not, they came in and saluted him each in turn; and there was in the welcome an *empressement*, a sort of pleasing eagerness, which put me quite in mind of old highland times; and, really, the more I saw of the Koords, the more did the resemblance they bore to the old highlanders strike me. The respect of the young for the old was particularly remarkable: the son never sat down in the father's presence, nor the nephew in that of the uncle, except by special desire, and then in a distant part of the room. Yet there appeared no want of tenderness on the part of the elders nor of willing and ready obedience, or filial affection, on the part of the young. At meals, though trays of victuals were brought in by servants who performed the more menial offices, the sons of the host waited on the guests and attended to their wants; handed water to drink, assisted them to such things as were out of their reach, trimmed the lights and exerted themselves to increase the comfort of all. The servants, too, were treated with great consideration and even familiarity, insomuch that it was some time before I could distinguish between the relatives of the family and its upper domestics.

The great, it is true, (that is the higher chiefs,) affect more state. The Khans have their "lords in waiting," their *Nazirs*, or stewards, their head *Peish-*

khedmuts, head *Furoshes*, &c., &c, like the higher Persian *noblesse;* but I am now speaking of domestic manners, and these were marked by kindness and good feeling. There was an openness and simplicity about many of these Koords that was very refreshing, and which often showed itself in their questions in a manner that amused while it pleased me. Among these Azeez Beg was remarkable; not that his simplicity was at all indicative of weakness; it was rather the overflow of a guileless, or, as we would say in Scotland, of an *aefauld* heart, which neither suspected others of deceit, nor desired to conceal a thought of its own. His wonder never ended at hearing that my country was more than *twelve hundred hours* distant, and he very naturally asked me if I did not feel as if I could never get all that way back, and if I did not weary to see my home and friends again. Neither he nor others could comprehend that any one should come so long a way merely for the sake of seeing the world; and they gave me credit, I am persuaded, for more motives to the journey than I chose to avow, in spite of my cross-questionings on the subject of trade and commerce. Such conversations usually terminated in a very minute inquiry into our habits and customs, particularly in regard to such matters as interested them most. A strong expression of admiration at our *Nizâm* and *Zabiteh*, as they call our military, fiscal, and general legislative arrangements, and of a wish that they could go to us or we should come to them and take their country in charge, was generally the result.

I used occasionally to amuse them by telling them that I was myself a native of a country not unlike Koordistan; mountainous and divided into tribes, often at war and feud with one another in times of old, and as fond as Koords could be of a *chuppow* upon their lowland neighbours; and they listened with interest and pleasure to my descriptions of the attachment of the clansmen to their chief, and the habits of the highlanders of old; and the comparisons I drew, or tried to draw, between the highlanders and Koords gave me the means of eliciting more from them than I could otherwise have managed to draw without offensive inquisitiveness, and brought to light some traits of manners that might otherwise have escaped me.

In the course of my stay at Souje Bulâgh, I saw the Khan in the state of his audience-hall surrounded by his turbaned clan, dealing out law, if not justice, to those who came for it, and served with a state which princes only assume. I visited and was visited by Moossa Khan his uncle, the ex-governor, and became convinced that in Koordistan, as elsewhere, there is a vast deal of difference between the *Ins* and *Outs* of place. Twice, in particular, we had grand *mujelises*, or assemblies of the tribe, at my lodgings, and very mortifying it was to me that I did not understand the conversation which was carried on entirely in Koordish. I could sometimes just trace the subjects, for there is much Persian in Koordish, but it was only enough to tantalize without satisfying or instructing me.

To this slight sketch of what I saw the Koords

at Souje Bulâgh, I wish I could add anything satisfactory about the ladies; but this, I am sorry to say, is out of my power. In cities the women of the better class expose themselves to view almost as little as those of Persia. Occasionally, I might see pretty features or fine dark eyes beaming forth from an unveiled face; but in general, although I saw multitudes of females, particularly on the day of the Khan's entry, when they covered the tops of the houses, they presented little more than a host of blue and checked *chaders*, or wrappers,—or figures in the ordinary costume of Persian peasants.

On the last night of my stay, the guests of Azeez Beg were increased by two Koords from Sulimaniah, but of Mookree blood, and relatives of our host, who had come in the suite of one of the Pashah of Sulimaniah's family proceeding on business to Tabreez. I made inquiries of them regarding the state of the country they had left, and the Meer of Rewandooz. It was curious to observe the wide difference between the report of these people and that of the Zerzaw Koords of Ooshnoo, or the Mookrees at this place. These, Koords themselves, are not ill-pleased to see a power of their own nation arising in a quarter which will act as a counterpoise with the government of Azerbijân, and induce it to treat them with more consideration, or give them a support to fall back upon, in case of continued and extreme severity from their Persian rulers. With them, therefore, the Meer is described as a noble character, just, though strict, seizing every means of increasing his own power and the

prosperity of his country; and rapidly succeeding, as leader of fifty thousand good soldiers, and lord of a rich and extensive country, completely obedient to his will. On the other hand, the retainers of Sulimaniah represent him as an unprincipled tyrant, who, more by dint of good fortune than judgment, has succeeded in wresting from others, when weakened by intestine disturbances, possessions which he is accumulating into an extensive but ill-organized state. Formerly, they say, he was the *Ryot*, — that is, a subject, of Sulimaniah, — from which Pashalic, during the late disputes between the present Pashah and his brother, he revolted and took Khoee, with several other districts. Amadia they admit to be a rich and populous but distracted country; its Pashah, a weak fool; each dozen of villages being governed by different lords, at variance with their neighbours, all of whom, from want of concert, thus fell an easy prey: yet the country, they declare, is far from acknowledging the authority of their conqueror. They deny the truth of his successes in Mesopotamia, or of his having even marched against Sinjâr; and aver that he has not more than from twelve to fourteen thousand soldiers, instead of fifty thousand, and these are all ignorant, undisciplined men, pressed from villages, neither paid nor clothed; one thousand, whom he calls his Gholaums, alone receive pay. Instead of being a mild tax-master, according to them he seizes everything he can lay hold of, from all ranks, permitting no one besides himself to accumulate riches; and, in place of encouraging fidelity in his servants, and

bravery in his troops, these Sulimaniah Koords declare, that the most dangerous thing a follower of his can do is to display extraordinary courage or activity; because he is then regarded with jealousy as a dangerous character, and generally put to death as such. They acknowledge that the country is free from robbery and uninfested by thieves, but attribute this immunity to the effects of terror, thousands of people having been sacrificed to make the impression required, as he has neither justice nor arrangement. They asserted that it was impossible he could withstand the power of the Azerbijân government, if it should send against him its regular troops — a point in which they were fairly at issue with the Koords of both Ooshnee and Souje Bulâgh. These,—who deprecate as the greatest possible misfortune the march of an army through their territories to attack the Meer, and who would very ill bear to see the spell of imagined impracticability, which has hitherto guarded their mountains from invasion, broken by a successful expedition against their neighbours,—these all treat with contempt the notion that any power of the Persian government could avail against the Meer and his Koords in their own fastnesses, and therefore they exaggerate the power and resources of the Meer as much as the others depreciate it. The possibility of the thing will soon be put to the test; for it appears that a force is now mustering to proceed to Sulimaniah in order to act against Rewandooz.

October 26.—I had my audience of leave from

the Khan, and about noon bade adieu to my kind hosts, who spoke of the pleasure they had received from my visit, and their regret at my quitting them so soon, in terms of greater sincerity, I hope and think, than usually breathes in such expressions. I am sure that, for my part, their courteous hospitality had created in me a feeling of warm goodwill, which I should be mortified to suppose not reciprocal. In justice to myself, however, I must observe that, knowing the expense to which my entertainers were put on my account must be considerable, and perhaps to them inconvenient, I always, on such occasions, contrived to leave behind me an equivalent compensation. I may further say, that the expense of such remuneration renders travelling, on this system, by far more costly than when you intrude on no one, and merely purchase what you require; but, in that way, you cannot purchase kindness, which, according to the French expression, is *impayable;* and he who would not consent to some extra cost to secure such a jewel, must love money more than I do.

Our lodging for the first night was in the mosque of a poor village, Beirâm, not more than twelve miles from Souje Bulâgh, to reach which we traversed a sharp highland country, the hills of which, moderate in height, were covered with dry herbage, crested with black rocks, and divided by narrow valleys. The village itself was wedged into the bottom of a very deep cleft, through which ran a stream of clear water; above and below were gardens, but the houses were mere hovels. It was

rather provoking to lose a whole fine afternoon at so miserable a place, when we had a very long journey before us for the next day; but such had been the Khan's disposition of things, and there was no altering it; and the less so as my matter-of-fact guards understood no language but their own; and could not, or would not, comprehend my wishes to go on and halt at a more advanced point of our course.

We rued their obstinacy, horse and man, on the morrow; for the march was a severe one. On it also, as we discovered, we had to come in contact with the Bilbâs Koords, who have a spot of ground in our way; and our guard, which had been changed, would not venture to proceed without a Bilbâs guide; so we stopped at a collection of huts, dignified by the name of Hussan Aga's village, and changed them for men of the place. Hussan Aga himself came out to meet us, and with hospitable alertness to offer all he had — a little bread and sour milk, "and such small gear," and to wonder at the outfit of the strangers. He seized upon the little double-barrelled pistol I wore at my waist, as if it had been an unheard-of treasure, and great was his astonishment at its detonating locks; but there was no hint expressed of desire to retain that or anything else: on the contrary, every disposition was evinced to

"Welcome the coming—speed the going guest,"

and we parted on the best of terms. Hitherto, that is for about twenty miles or more, we had traversed

a country like that of the preceding day, that is, earthy hills covered with dry herbage, with black rocky ridges issuing from their sides, and crowning their tops. We had passed through a pretty valley with a village and fortified hillock, named Yalte-meer, and had traced up the bed of a fine stream, called, I think, the Tetawah, which finds its way towards Marâgha. We now approached a bolder and loftier range of mountains which rose in front, opposing themselves to our progress; and these were to be crossed before nightfall; an enterprise, I assure you, of no unformidable aspect, especially as the afternoon was far advanced. We did, however, as we had often done before, "set a stout heart to a stae brae," and plunging into the ravine which still intervened between us and them, soon reached the projection which formed our ladder of ascent.

It was a desperate pull; and our labour was not lessened by the frequent admonition of our guides to make the best of our speed, as the place was very unsafe, bands of plunderers, from the neighbouring Bilbâs districts, being much in the habit of coming hither to pick up stray caravans. Up, therefore, we puffed, and blew, and scrambled. I make a point of sparing my horses in such pinches, and therefore insisted on my people dismounting, showing them the example myself; so you may figure the effect of a two hours' and a half pull, upon us all, your humble servant included, up such a perpendicular ladder as this proved, at the tail of a long hot day's work. We reached the top just at five in

the evening, a short while before sunset, and were rewarded by a glorious and extensive view. The general aspect of the *coup d'œil*, reminded me of what I had seen from the tops of some of the lower mountains of the Himâlâ range, where the grand snowy chain of peaks was not in sight; for the western side of the mountains is covered with oak bushes, which, in the uncertain light of evening, might pass for forests, and the dell at our feet was as profound as those of the Indian mountains, reminding us of the severe descent we had yet awaiting us. The sinking sun enforced the admonition; so, after having made such observations on the neighbouring country as the situation enabled me to do, we plunged downhill, like the departing luminary, and were soon half lost amidst the rocks, and the bushes, and the darkness of the descent.

This range of mountains, which I could trace in a direction N.W. and S.E. for full sixty miles, is, I believe, a branch of a still larger and more lofty one which we saw rising before us, the same I had seen from Ooshnoo; and we could discern from this elevated spot the very gorge over which, on the second day's journey from hence, we expect to pass. Our descent occupied nearly two hours, a great part of it being in the dark, stumbling among rocks and stumps, and groping our way along the edge of very ugly precipices; but, thank Heaven, we reached the bottom without tumbling over them, and at length found ourselves at Nistân, a village belonging to the Peishkhidmut Bashee, of the late Prince Royal, Furrookh Khan. It was no easy matter to

pick our way among the passages of this said village, as, the houses being built on terraces on the hill-side, their roofs were on a level with the path above them, and it required a sharp eye to keep the horses from the risk of paying the inmates an unexpected visit from above. At last we made good our way to our munzil, which, as usual, was the mosque of the place—a tabernacle of clay like the rest, but large and spacious; and we were kindly received by the Naib of Furrookh Khan, who had a fine blazing fire ready for us by the time we alighted.

On entering the outward aisle, or verandah, of the mosque, a sight presented itself which, for a while, arrested my steps by its singularity. The whole verandah, which was of great length, was occupied by a double row of men, sitting face to face, with a space of seven or eight feet between them. I thought, at first, they were praying, and listened for the intonations of the *Allah-hu-Akber!* but it soon appeared that they were engaged in more worldly occupation—they were eating their dinner, in fact; and a goodly assembly of them there was. Old and young were equally busy—beards black, red, and grey, were in that amusing motion which is so well described in the words of the song,

"'T is merry in hall, when beards wag all,"

which you may believe recurred to my memory at the sight. It was just like the primitive hall of some rude chief of the olden time, and you might have fancied the different ranks of his retainers in

the various grades of company visible, from the lower end to the top of the room, where sat four or five grand-looking grey-bearded Koords, occupying the places of honour. There they were—all fists in the dish, and hands to the mouth, fast discussing what was before them. I supposed it might be some *fête du village* given by its lord on a particular occasion; but on inquiry I found it was the custom not only of this, but of the Koordish villages in general, that after the labours of the day the men assemble together in the mosque, or some other public building, say their prayers together, and each bringing what he may have of fare, they eat their dinner in company. They then gossip together till it is time to separate, when all retire to their own homes, where their wives and children have had their separate meal. If they have guests, they bring each his own along with him, and these have generally mats spread for their accommodation in the mosque, where they sleep.

I know not what you may be disposed to think of this custom; it may certainly appear to trench a little upon domestic society, but there is so little disposition to that in the East, that I was pleased to observe this kindly appearance of sociality even among the males of the village. Had the females been admitted to the *coterie*, I own, whatever the Koordish lords of the creation may think, it would, in my opinion, have been an improvement. I was glad, too, to find, that whatever may be the case in other places, here at least the people seemed to have good food to eat. There was neither want of good wheaten

bread nor meat, nor even, I understand, of a good rice pillaw. I fear, however, this is not general: at the previous night's lodging, though I was the Khan's guest, there was not a grain of rice to be found; I was obliged to furnish my own dinner, and the servants got nothing but a bread composed of barley and *arzun*,—a small grain, I believe of the millet species.

My lodging, this night, was very comfortable, nor was I disturbed by the inopportune piety of the inhabitants or servants of the place, as on the former night, when a Moollah very unceremoniously came in, and throwing his cloak down upon my carpet, without "with your leave, or by your leave," commenced his *numâz* in a Stentorian voice. My servants remonstrated, but it was not without some difficulty that he was convinced of having committed an unjustifiable intrusion, and induced to seek another oratory. In truth, however, he might be said to have most right on his side.

Morning showed us our resting-place, and a curious one it was, dropped, as it were, in the bottom of a deep chasm, in an amphitheatre of mighty mountains which rise, sprinkled with oak bushes, for some thousands of feet above it, and terminate in the dark crags which form the crests of all in these parts, and which here are remarkably lofty and precipitous. The immediate banks of the lower dell were sprinkled with fine trees, and bushes of oak, barbary, and thorn, among which the grape-vines, now turning to a vivid crimson, and the fruit-trees, just commencing to shew their yellow

leaves, made a beautiful variety. It was a pleasant contrast from the bare country we had marched through from Tabreez; for though the wood which covered the glens and the mountains was rather like coppice than forest, it still imparted to them a clothed and smiling aspect compared to the arid rocks that frown around the lake of Ooroomia. Yet, after all, it was but an apology for the beauties of a wooded country: the stunted trees and bushes through which we wound our way, had nothing in common with the deep impervious luxuriance of a Mazunderan, or a South American forest, nor with the striking magnificence of those primeval woods which clothe the mountains of Himâlâ, nor even with the amenity of a Scotch or English wood. They resembled rather those low extensive jungles in India, so well known to the weary traveller, in the hot season there, beneath which all is brown if not bare. Not that the hills here are deficient in herbage; for the quantity of dry grass which covers the surface, shows how luxuriant must be the spring growth which yields such an autumn stubble: but all is of the pale yellow of straw, on which the deep green of the oak tells with singular and rather harsh effect.

We descended the glen, for about a fursung, among craggy knolls covered with this sort of coppice, sometimes passing over rocky promontories, when the path along the bank of the stream was diverted by the meeting and precipitous cliffs; but at length we left it altogether, and crossing the shoulder of a hill, found ourselves in the deep valley

of Seradusht, and near the bed of a considerable river, named, I think, the Aksû, which rises in the district of Lahijan, and, as do all streams in this quarter, hastens to join the Tigris. The valley itself is of no great breadth, not unlike a Scotch strath, varied by height and hollow, and knoll and fall, and appears once to have had a great deal of cultivation, now abandoned and grown over with the yellow grass that covers all the country. Before us rose the huge mountain of Hoomeël, with which we were to wrestle on the morrow; and at its feet, on an inferior rising ground, stood the fort of Seradusht, our lodging for the night; on the right, far away, might be seen the snow-spotted mountains of Ooshnoo.

We forded the river by a sharp and difficult ford, in preference to trusting ourselves upon a bridge of wood and wickerwork, erected by the inhabitants of the neighbouring village in the spring, and now almost useless. The rest of our way, which extended to five or six miles, led us up a curious succession of broken country, in which we had to round the forks of some very deep rocky ravines. In these we found small villages, consisting of two or three houses, perched like ravens' nests among the cliffs, and almost hid in the foliage of their vines and fruit trees. On gaining the height of our ascent from one of these clefts, we found ourselves unexpectedly at the gate of Seradusht, after a ride of not more than sixteen miles.

Abdool Sumud Khan, the governor of this district, received us with perfect cordiality, and welcomed us in all due form. He was a jolly, good-

humoured, rather ignorant man, who asked a number of strange questions, and who was as much surprised and delighted with the few things I had to show him, as any wild Koord of his suite. He furnished us with sufficient food for ourselves, but swore that there was not as much barley in the place as would feed our horses—that his own, which was worth a hundred tomâns, got nothing but *arzun*, and ours must fare like his. In the end, however, he did procure barley; but when I wanted to get a supply for the next day's march, in the course of which I understood there was no population, my jeloodar had great difficulty in finding six or seven mauns, about half our day's consumption; and for himself and the people, not a cake of bread was to be had. I found the people themselves ate a mixture of barley and *arzun*, and this it was which made the former so scarce.

The people complained, indeed, of great distress, and one man, the Khan's *Isheck Aghassee*, or chamberlain, declared that the Azerbijân government would depopulate the country altogether, if they continued to exact from it as much as they do at present. "What do you think?" said he: "they take from five to six thousand tomâns a year from these ruins you see here, and there are not one hundred families in the village; besides, we are just on the highway, and we pay almost half as much in *soorsaut*, besides what the serbâz rob and plunder from our villagers! and all this from a miserable set of Koords, who, at best, have scarcely enough to eat, and the greater part of whom the plague

carried off three years ago!" That this man spoke much that was truth, I fear is certain; that the statement may be exaggerated greatly, is not only possible but probable; but much will, after all, remain to move compassion—for the miserable appearance of the villagers, as well as for their fewness, I can answer.

October 29.—A delicious morning: just as the sun shot forth its first rays above the eastern mountains, did we issue from the gate of Seradusht to cross the pass of Hoomeel. I would that I could convey to you a vivid idea of the scenery we passed through this day, it was so grand and impressive. But descriptions, in such cases, seldom succeed in suggesting any distinct notion of the truth; and for this plain reason, that all. mountainous scenery wears a strong family likeness, and the shades of difference between the features of various mountain ranges, or *coups d'œil*, are just the very niceties that escape, in attempting to embody them in a description. For instance, what idea do you gather from being told that we ascended gradually among hills covered with oak, looking down on either hand into dells of great depth and beauty; or, that after such an ascent, we found ourselves on the brink of a dark chasm of immense depth, carved in the solid rock, among the fragments of which, at the bottom, foamed and twisted a boiling torrent. These are all very good set phrases, and, so far as they go, tell the truth; but I defy any one, in poetry or prose, to convey to a third person the sense of grandeur with which this peep into the

bowels of the gigantic Hoomeel impressed me, as I gazed down into the abyss, and upwards at the shattered grey cliffs that rose far above, as the novel writers have it, "in stern sublimity." When such sights come across me, I do long for a touch of the pen of a Byron; they are well suited to his wild and wayward moods, and *he* might have painted them in

"Thoughts that breathe, and words that burn."

As for me, it will not be; and I must have recourse to very plain prose to apprise you that we now stood high amid that lofty chain which forms, as it were, the backbone of this part of Asia, from whose bowels rush the springs that feed the mighty Euphrates and not less noble Tigris, whose loftiest summits wear perpetual snows, and reach a height of from ten to fifteen thousand feet. The ridge we were now about to cross forms the crest of this great chain, which may be said to embrace in its breadth the whole of Koordistan, and contains in itself a system of numerous valleys and basins, which once were, and might again become, populous and productive, the people of which are aboriginal, and, with the exception of the change in their religion, remain much the same in character and customs as they were two thousand years ago.

This crest asserts its primitive character in a geological sense, by the huge granitic peaks and masses which rise above the lower heights, and impart to it that square and angular aspect so distinctive of primitive rocks. In fact, during our

first ascent and descent we passed over whole hills of quartz in blocks and masses of original rock; and though the dark white-veined limestone of the lower country abounded both in the ravine and on the sides of the mountain as we ascended, it was mingled with still more of siliceous and schistose rocks, which form the greater portion of the Hoomeel mountain.

From the river, which flowed through the deep chasm we had crossed, we entered a tributary glen which led us, by a winding route, first, as it seemed, into the very bowels of the mountain; and then by a sudden sharp pull up the hollow in which it terminated, we attained the summit of the gorge. Our first ascent and descent, which, after all, were the most rugged and laborious, occupied three hours —that of Hoomeel itself was completed in half that time. The view from the gorge was such as might be expected from our elevated position and the nature of the country it commands,—grand and imposing. The Aksu, which, after traversing the district of Seradusht, takes a sharp turn and bursts right through the chain by a very narrow black chasm, was seen winding far below us like a silver thread: and the whole scene carried me strongly back to a view I once enjoyed in the Indian mountains from a point near the village of Comharsein, below which rolls the Sutledge, just such a thread as the Aksu seems from Hoomeel; but then there was wanting that unique, that inexpressibly majestic finishing to the picture, the Himâlâ, capped by their eternal snows.

Our descent from these altitudes was exceedingly tedious and painful, and to the loaded cattle in some places sufficiently dangerous. As for ourselves, we went on foot nearly the whole way, which, as it occupied three hours and a half, was pretty fatiguing. On the way we met a large caravan of bullocks and cows, guarded by, I dare say, fifty armed Koords, coming from the hills about Suleimaniah, loaded with gallnuts, butter, *arzun* &c. and bound for Souje Bulâgh. They were most fierce truculent-looking fellows, and appeared quite as likely to rifle as to guard a caravan; and though my people blustered and swaggered a little when they had passed by, about the "dogs of Koords," I am of opinion that, had we not had a Koordish guide, we should have fared very ill.

At the foot of the descent we found ourselves on the banks of the Aksu, through the bright green limpid waters of which we passed without difficulty, and a mile's ascent of the opposite bank carried us to what had once been the cultivated grounds of the village Akoortah. During the whole day we had not seen one peopled village, although we had passed by the ruins of many that were deserted. The only one which still could boast of some half dozen inhabitants, besides being too distant from our path, was higher up among the mountains, and only to be reached by what seemed no better nor safer than a goat-track. At Akoortah we hoped to procure both bread and corn; but not intending to remain there, I merely sent a servant to get what we wanted, waiting ourselves the while, and pastur-

ing the horses on the grass which abounded around us. Our disappointment was not small at finding from the man's report, who returned after an absence of near three hours, that the village was occupied only by three families, who had run away from Rewandooz, and who had nothing for themselves but a little *arzun* and barley meal; and of this they baked a few cakes to stop the craving appetites of my servants. On the man's rejoining us, I resolved to move forward as far as I could while daylight lasted; and then coming to for the night in some spot where abundance of grass might be found to make up to the cattle for short commons in corn.

Accordingly, finding such a spot about four miles further on, at the site of a deserted village where wood and water as well as grass abounded, I there spread my carpet for the night; and giving my own rice to the people for a pillaw, contented myself with a dish of tea and a crumb of black bread before turning in, which I did very soon. The place was rather open, and we were forced to keep watch and watch; but the night passed without alarm, though in the morning we observed two fellows sneaking off, who had evidently been prowling about in hopes of some opportunity to carry off stray trifles.

Our quarters were not so snug as to tempt us to exceed the hours of early rising. We were on foot by the first of dawn, and had made several miles of road before the light was strong enough to show us where we were. We climbed up the shoulder of a lofty hill upon our left, and descended into a sweet pastoral and woodland valley lying strangely

enough between what might be called two gigantic strata of the mountain. The crest of the height on our left was broken and abrupt, while that on our right rose in steep but gradual acclivity to the top, the western face of which was rocky and precipitous. Nothing could exceed the ground of this valley in point of beauty and variety of form; and had it not been for the sickly faded yellow of the grass, the colouring of the landscape would have been enchanting;—it was that of gorgeous autumn. But alas! for those splendid but short-lived tints—those bright and lovely hues which, like the hectic flush upon the pallid cheek of consumption, are but the harbingers of death and decay. I cannot say I ever could bring myself to love that season—at least not since the spring-tide of life has passed by. It reminds us too painfully of what has passed, and is passing daily around us; far, far more painful than any thought of what we must ourselves come to. The beauties of autumn are like the days that precede a painful separation, when every one tries to look cheerful but has not the heart to do so, and forces a melancholy gaiety to cheat the time both to himself and others. I never see them glowing on the rich woods but I think of the lines of Moore—

> "Ne'er tell me of beauties serenely adorning
> The close of our day, the calm eve of our night;
> Give me back, give me back, the wild freshness of morning,
> Her tears and her smiles are worth evening's best light."

Nay, far better do I love the stern rough aspect of winter, which flatters not, but tells us honestly of

all we have lost, yet gives a surly promise of brighter days to come.

Here, however, autumn glowed lord of the ascendant in his most brilliant garb, and again I long for a poetic fit to describe his splendours; but as I should certainly break down in the attempt, I must go on in unadorned prose, to declare to you that the lemon and scarlet of the numerous pear-trees; the vivid green and gold and crimson of the beautiful sumach bushes, which here have been planted like vineyards; the bright pink, the pale amber, and blood-red purple of the grape vines, which grow wild in abundance, as well as in cultivated patches, and which clothed the lips of the ravines, and in many places the whole mountain sides, showing "where once a garden smiled,"—these, I say, formed an Iris of brilliant colours which I have seldom seen equalled, and never surpassed; and which embroidered, as it were, with inimitable magnificence the less gorgeous, but scarcely less rich clothing of oak that covered the hills as with a robe of brown and yellow, mingled with deep green.

Another feature in the landscape of yesterday and to-day, which peculiarly attracted my attention, was the number of ancient burying-grounds which occurred in the course of our march, far from any present habitation of man, but pointing out, doubtless, the sites of villages whose people had long since ceased to be. We had remarked them, indeed, ever since quitting Ooroomia; but here these monuments of forgotten generations are far more strikingly distinguished by the groves of oak trees with which

they are surrounded, and often closely covered. The Koords, fierce and rude as they are, appear to have paid a singular and affecting attention to these receptacles of the dust of their kindred: even the situation appears to have been the object of careful selection; for they are generally pleasantly placed on little heights or knolls, overlooking the fields and plains in which the deceased may have delighted; as if the spirits could be soothed with the objects thus loved while animating their fleshy tabernacles. These groves are still evidently the objects of regard if not of veneration, for you never see them touched. I observed a party of men engaged in one of these cemeteries in digging a grave—it was that of a child which had died in a neighbouring village; this, they said, was the place were its fathers had been interred, and it was meet that its little dust should moulder with theirs. I remarked, too, in these burying-grounds, vestiges of peculiar care. Graves surrounded by little walls of stone, as if they were the property of some particular family, or perhaps the tomb of some elder of high estimation and sanctity. Some were grey and moss-grown, and told of a long lapse of years; but in other cases, heaps of thorns and brushwood piled in the enclosure, denoted the care of the living to guard the reliques of their lately deceased relatives from the attacks of wolves, hyenas, or jackals, the only resurrectionists known in these parts. But I am getting prosy, so we shall waive the remainder of the subject for the present, and descend from the pleasant valley which partly suggested the above lucubrations, to a fine rapid stream that here cuts one

of the gigantic strata I have mentioned, right in two; and after running for some miles in a deep dark channel, returns to intersect the same stratum and regain, as it were, its former course, which terminates in joining the Aksu near the place of our last night's bivouac. These *capricios* of mountain streams are often, as in this instance, as remarkable as unaccountable.

On our descent, my attention was attracted to another set of objects, which in various parts of the country had often engaged it, and to which I may for a moment direct yours. They were large heaps of stones, piled on either side the way, mingled with smaller pyramids of pebbles and tall single stones, with a smaller one on its top—all, of course, placed there by the hand of man. This was what the Persians call a *Nezer-kerdeh*, or *Nezer-gah;* that is, some spot which has been rendered holy, or at least venerable, by the attention of some saint or sage who may have stopped here and performed a miracle, or eaten his breakfast perhaps; or, as I suspect, it has fully as often originated in a murder or an accident, —a place where blood has been shed, and the dead been buried. It was provoking that I could never come at any of the histories or traditions of these Nezer-gahs. In general, the guides, when questioned, could only tell me that it was a highly regarded spot—a very old affair, they knew not how ancient, and that all people as they pass still throw a stone to the heap, or tie a bit of rag to any bush that grows nigh, as a propitiation to the spirit of the saint or of the place.

I have been sadly disappointed, however, by these

Koords in the matter of their superstitions—of *faerie*, witchcraft, and the like. In spite of all that Dr. Ross says, they either, so far as I could see, have but little genius for these things, or it comes little out. I questioned some of the old Mookrees very closely as to their belief in spirits, but I could not even interest them in the subject. I asked them whether they did not believe that the images of their dead friends occasionally came to visit the earth, and appeared to them: they said no; only in dreams. In such a country one would have expected to find a thousand picturesque superstitions and *diableries*; but all seems to be confined to the clumsy fancies of lucky and unlucky hours—the influence of the evil eye—a few omens drawn from such unpoetic accidents as sneezing once or twice when on the eve of an undertaking, &c. &c. Yet still I am not without hopes; I prefer believing that the error is rather in my dulness at discovering facts, than in lack of facts to discover; but we shall see—in the mean time let us get on.

Just at the entrance of the dark chasm formed by the disruptured rocks where the river passes through this slice of the mountain, a bridge had in the olden time been thrown across from cliff to cliff, but a portion of the mason-work of the piers was now all that hinted at the former existence of such an accommodation. Some fiercer flood than ordinary had swept away the fabric, for which good-natured purpose it must have taken the trouble of rising at least sixty or seventy feet. In after times, a person whom my guide designated as Baba Keir-Aga Coshan, had

the public spirit to erect another; but distrusting the ancient foundation, he chose one some twenty or thirty yards higher up, just where the water spreads before plunging in between the rocks. This site of course demanded a far greater span, and accordingly there were built four tall piers, two being in the course of the stream. Of these, from twenty to twenty-five feet in height are still extant, but the fabric they supported, which I take to have been only of wood, has, like its neighbour below, been long since carried off, and passengers are now left to find their way, like us, as best they may. Perhaps these piers may have been only intended to support a temporary fabric of branches and wicker-work, such as is used in other parts of the country, and which seldom last above a season; and it often happens that from their disrepair and the state of the roads in spring, these routes become impassable; in winter they are wholly so, from the quantity of snow that lies on the mountains. To cross Hoomeel, for instance, is never attempted; and the passes of Coorteck and Soonâs, by the latter of which we came, are fatal to many men and cattle every season. Last year, I think it was, nearly two hundred serbâz, who were proceeding from the village of Nistân by Soonâs, together with upwards of two hundred yaboos and asses, were lost in one day. The sun shone clear in the heavens, and the weather below was fine, so that the men were tempted to proceed on their way. But in these lofty hills the wind often blows hard while a calm reigns below, and it seems a gale was blowing in

the pass, which raised the dry snow in clouds; this was observed from several points below, but no one knew of the unhappy caravan, and even had the truth been known, what mortal aid could have availed? The whole were buried by the snow-clouds, and frozen to death by force of the wind alone. I was told that nearly a thousand living creatures, men and cattle, had perished that season at Seradusht. Nay, so severe is the winter there, that the Khan's steward told me he had frequently been storm-stayed in the Khan's house, so that he could not get to his own for days; and that communication between the villagers was frequently cut off, so that all general intercourse ceased for months. What a season must winter be in such an elevated region! no wonder the waters swell when the snow melts, and that bridges are carried off. At this time, however, we experienced no difficulty, for the water was easily fordable just above the last-built bridge.

From hence we ascended by a zigzag path to another valley, where were the ruins of several large villages, and whole sheets of vines and sumach bushes left to utter neglect. It was truly a beautiful spot; but after passing through it, we descended once more into the bed of the river, the water of which was as clear as crystal, and fuller of fish than any stream I ever saw before. The shallows were absolutely covered with great monsters basking, many of them at least thirty to thirty-six inches long, and they swarmed also in the streams. I was so excited at seeing them, that about ten o'clock, when we came to a halt for breakfast, I put up my rod to

try if they would rise to the fly, the only bait at hand; but they would not look at it—at least the big ones would not stir, so that they certainly were not trout. I think they were of the same sort that I had seen also in shoals at Souje Bulâgh, and of which I caught a few very handsome fish, but full of bones, of the species of which I am ignorant.

A long winding ravine full of abandoned villages, which terminated in a hollow and sharp ascent among the mountains, brought us to the *geddook* or pass of Kawiân, from whence we overlooked the plain, or rather broad valley of Suleimaniah; for it is anything but a plain, being exceedingly furrowed by ravines and hillocks of earth. On the right hand we looked up a long hollow to a very wild mass of mountains which were in the Rewandooz Pashah's country. In front we overlooked a ridge of low hills, beyond which were Erbile and Kerkook, and many other celebrated places of ancient Assyria. Further to the left lay our route to Baghdad; and under us, at the distance of about ten miles, lay the town of Suleimaniah, scarcely visible from its situation in a hollow.

The descent was gradual, down the bare side of a hill; and we reached the place about half an hour before sunset, without having passed through a single inhabited place from the time we left Seradusht. If the depopulation on the road was depressing, there was little to cheer us on approaching or on entering the town. I never beheld a more miserable collection of hovels and ruins. We rode through masses of rubbish, up to what had been

the Pashah's house, or *palace*, if you will. It was in utter ruin, uninhabitable, except one small corner, where his harem was bestowed. He himself occupied a tent outside the town. I had sent a man forward to secure us lodgings; after a while he found us picking our way among the rubbish and broken walls, seeking for some one who might tell us where *any body* might be. He led us to the place appointed for us, (a perfect wreck,) through a labyrinth of mud-heaps, that had been houses. Our lodging had been the residence of some great man, a relative of the Pashah, who, at this time, was absent at Tabreez. It was well for him; for here, at least, he could not have lived. We had it all, such as it was, to ourselves and our cattle. It was one great mass of mud; a dozen open spaces that had once been chambers, surrounding a large rambling hall, with a square hole in the middle, intended for a cistern. Here was our stable; I occupied a corner of one of the outer spaces, open to all winds, but fortunately none blew strongly. The Pashah sent a thousand civil messages and a good dinner from his own table, and so closed evening the first at Suleimaniah.

Assuredly the impression created by these two last marches has been anything but cheering; there never was a sweeter country more withered by the hand of the spoiler. That it had once been the site of many a happy home was obvious, from the roofless houses of numerous villages, pleasantly seated in sheltered nooks, shaded by noble walnut and mulberry trees, with sweet little murmuring streamlets, and surrounded by vineyards, run wild.

It was painful to see that all was silent and desolate, and more so to see that it was from no natural decay; it was like gazing on the face of the dead, who have been wasted by suffering and disease. Nothing was there of the mingled tenderness and melancholy with which we look on the placid features of those whose ends has been peaceful,

> "Before decay's effacing fingers
> Have swept the lines where beauty lingers."

Here there is no "rapture of repose:"—it is verily the "abomination of desolation;" and though permitted by the Almighty for his own wise purposes, his agents have been chiefly the violence and rapacity of man. To all my inquiries as to how this universal depopulation arose, the same answer was always returned:—"The plague came three years ago and swept the country, and it was followed by the Persian army, which has consumed what the plague had left, and has ravaged every village on the road, so that none now remain."

Farewell, for the present: my next shall tell what remains to be said of Suleimaniah.

LETTER VI.

Fate of Suleimaniah.—Condition of the Pashah.—His Conversation.—Fire-proof Seyeds.—The City.—Burying-grounds.—A Mourner.—Take Leave of the Pashah.—Another Disappointment.—Sheherazoor.—The Serteep Khan.—A Koordish Guide.—Cross the Mountains.—Karadagh.—Jews.—Koords deficient in Imaginative Superstition.—Explanation of Nezer-Kerdehs.—Jaff and Hamadawind Tribes.—Derbend of the Sugramah Pass.—A Glimpse of Assyria.—Zhallah.—A Dwarf.—Mehmandaree.—A stony Land.—A fine Oak.—Selim Aga.—Koordish Chiefs.—Reflections regarding the Assyrian Empire.—Rustum Aga.—General Characteristics of the Koords.—Kufri.—Change of Manners as well as of People.

Suleimaniah, 1st November.

DEAR ——,

Two days ago I closed a letter for you, which, however, I must take on with me to Baghdad, as there is no London post here. Yesterday, after breakfast, some of the Persian officers who command the Azerbijân troops here, came to visit me. They gave a wretched account of the state of things here, but not more so than appearances warranted and confirmed. I afterwards went to wait on the Pashah, whom I found in his tent, surrounded by a number of good-looking Koords, but with no great show or state—poor man! he can't afford it. The small state, or Pashalic, of Suleimaniah, never either very rich or powerful, has of late been the

prey of an accumulation of misfortunes, which have reduced it to extreme misery. First came family disputes, civil war—two brothers striving for the supremacy. This brought in foreign intervention, as a matter of course; and the Pashalic, which before had been dependent on that of Baghdad, fell into the hands of the Persian Prince of Kermanshah, Mahomed Allee Meerza. Intestine struggles and commotions, however, still continued, and weakened both parties so much that, after the death of Mahomed Allee Meerza, their neighbour, the Meer of Rewandooz, thought fit to overrun, and appropriate a considerable portion of the territory to himself. This brought on *his* head a war with the Azerbijân government, which had assumed authority over these parts, and on unfortunate Suleimaniah the maintenance of a Persian army, in addition to the payment of a Persian tribute. Then came the plague, which carried off more than half the people of town and country; and, of the remaining half, all that could, seeing there was neither relief from its inflictions nor any remission of imposts on the part of government, emigrated to places where the burthens are lighter—to Rewandooz, to Kerkook, Erbile, and other districts in the low country. Thus does improvident Persia strengthen the hands of her enemies while weakening her own. But the Pashah, poor man! is of all the people the man who has it least in his power to escape the storm; and there he sits in the wreck of former greatness, puzzled and perplexed in the extreme to comply with all the demands made upon

him, yet unable to resist them. Enviable condition! Thus you will not be surprised that I saw little of pomp or magnificence, or even of bare comfort, around him. His people inquired of mine whether I had carpets and numuds to spread upon the mud floor of my lodging, as they were rather scarce in the place; and sure enough not one was supplied me,—for the best of all reasons, because they were not!

I found the Pashah a pleasant and, for a Koord, a well-informed person; having more, indeed, of the Osmanloo than of the Koord in his appearance. He asked me a world of questions about the state of Europe, the relations of each power with the others, and particularly those between the Porte, Russia, and Mahomed Allee Pashah. With the affairs of America he appeared tolerably well acquainted, putting right some of the Persians who were in the assembly, and also some of his own people in their odd notions regarding it. The condition of India was discussed, and a great deal said about modern inventions, particularly of a warlike description. The improvement of percussion locks introduced a discussion about the various modes of producing fire, and that, in return, the best mode of controlling or resisting it. These matters led to the mention of a subject to which I had more than once before heard allusion made, and which affords a curious specimen of the superstition of the people—of credulity on one side, and impudent quackery on the other.

Seyeds, as you know, are the descendants of Mahomet; but they are divided into several classes, some of which enjoy a higher portion of reverence

than others, as being possessed of certain attributes derived, as is believed, from their venerated origin.

Of these, one which is only arrogated by some few families, is the power of enduring the action of fire unharmed. At Souje Bulâgh it was said that a family thus endowed resided at a village not far off; but unfortunately, when a desire to witness this miracle was expressed, no one could be produced to perform it. It is asserted, that these gifted persons will go into a sort of oven called a *tendour*, around which fire is heaped until it is red hot, and that they will heap fire upon their heads, and yet still call out "I am cold!"—and walk out unhurt. They will take a piece of redhot iron out of the fire without injury to their hands; and in short, if we believe what is said of them, they are fire-proof.

To laugh at this absurd fable would have been equally useless and offensive; for, as all such stories, whatever their origin, have been confirmed by the traditionary belief of ages, there is no confuting them except by the test of experiment—a test that is always shunned by the parties professing, where detection is likely to ensue. When, therefore, assurances of the truth of these miraculous powers were pressed on me from all sides, I merely replied that, such might be the case; but that to believe it implicitly was out of my power, until I should have seen with my own eyes some irrefragible proof of the fact; —such as one of the gifted persons taking from a furnace, with his bare arm, a piece of redhot iron, and holding it for some time in his fingers—this would satisfy me of his being endowed with some

miraculous power. "But," replied the whole assembly, with one voice, "there can be no doubt of the fact; we all know it for a truth."—"Well," insisted I, "when I see the redhot iron in the Seyed's hand, I, too, shall believe, and admit that such a power must have come from God, be the purpose for which it is given what it may."—"You will?" said a Persian Meerza, who had been busily, but vainly, endeavouring to entrap me into a religious discussion: "and will you then agree to anything he shall say?"—"Suppose," said I, "he should declare to me that there is no God, would you have me agree to him in such a doctrine?"—"No," replied he; "but that is an impossibility."—"Not at all," replied I; "for you have had among yourselves instances of men declaring themselves to be God and yet pretending to miraculous powers, and of others who deny the existence of such a being altogether; therefore you must see that no one can safely promise to believe all that another may say before he hears it, and knows whether it be fit to acquiesce in."—"Right," said the Pashah; "it is contrary to reason to do so." So the Meerza said no more.

"And now, Pashah," said I, "permit me to ask if your Highness has ever seen one of these Seyeds perform the extraordinary feats ascribed to them." The reply was in the negative. "And have you, then?" said I, turning to an old man who had been very eager in the discussion. "No," replied he; "but I have seen one take fire into his mouth."—"That," said I, "is what any Hooqu-bâz (juggler) with us will do; it proves nothing but that the whole is pro-

bably a trick." "He says the truth," observed the Pashah again; "I have seen such tricks performed by these fellows myself." I then turned to each and all of the assembly who had joined in the conversation, but not one of them could say he had ever personally witnessed anything of the sort; so, with an air of indifference, I remarked to the Meerza, that, as nothing further than hearsay had been brought to prove the asserted miracles, he could not expect me to surrender my judgment or belief, which, accordingly, I should retain until he was ready with better evidence.

On the following morning, (Nov. 1st,) I strolled out to see the town, and acquire a better idea of its condition, than my first cursory glance of it enabled me to do. Certainly the impressions excited by that slight view, were in no degree weakened by further observation. All was misery, and filth, and wreck, and abomination. Not a decent habitation was to be seen. None of the people, high or low, have had heart, or means probably, to repair their ruined houses, so that the huts that have arisen upon the rubbish of the old ones, are of a meaner description than usual. The earth, too, of Suleimaniah, which forms the houses, is of so friable a nature, as to offer but little resistance to the action of the weather, mouldering down as soon as it is left to itself; so that by the operation of various causes, the town has almost disappeared. The bazaars presented a better show than I expected, from the state of the rest; for though most of the shops were occupied by hucksters and retailers

of trifling wares, they still made some appearance, and in the open spaces, where country produce was sold, a good many people might be seen collected. I was told there were still from one thousand to one thousand five hundred families resident in Suleimaniah; but to judge from appearances, I should think that the first mentioned number, which implies a total of at least five thousand souls, was nearest to, if not beyond, the truth.

The town itself, lying in a hollow, cannot be seen except from some surrounding height, and the best view is to be had from two hillocks used as burying-grounds—far, far better tenanted than the town itself. Descending from one of those which I had mounted to obtain a view of the surrounding country, I heard a female voice in loud lamentation, and saw, at some distance among the tombs, a woman sitting by a new-made grave, over which she was weeping and bewailing with gestures of the deepest distress. We went up to observe her, but she was too much absorbed in her grief to take any notice of us, if indeed she could have seen us, which was not likely, as we approached from behind. She was busied in ornamenting the grave in a fanciful manner, common to the poor, by placing little white stones in curious figures upon it; but ever and anon she would desist, and, wringing her hands with an air of perfect despair, give vent to more frantic tones of anguish, as if she felt the utter vanity of such offices of affection. Her passionate grief attracted the notice even of the servants who were following me, hard-hearted fellows

enough, on ordinary occasions; for it was obviously no got-up scene—no sorrow for the public eye: there she sat, poor soul! all alone in her misery, far from the sight or hearing of any mortal, except such casual passers by as ourselves, pouring out her sorrow in the ear of Him alone, who had seen fit to send the affliction that caused it to flow.

"Now that poor creature has lost a husband or a son, who was her only support," said one of the servants; "for you see, sir, none but such as have no other help, give way to grief like that; those who have families sit still and cry in the house." "It is true," remarked another; "and you see she minds nothing. It is only them, sir, whose hearts are filled with one thought that lament thus; she can think of nothing, poor soul! but of what she has lost."

I sent one of them to learn what loss it was that had occasioned so bitter a grief: it was her son—her only son—all she had in this world to look to for comfort or support, for she was a widow! and her agony was increased by the question. She was obviously poor; so I gave her some money, which she took, and blessed me: but it was obviously for the sympathy rather than the relief, that she was grateful; for the money lay neglected on the grave, while, with upraised hands, she blessed me, and prayed that God might be with me wherever I went.

This day I took leave of the Pashah, having no motive to continue my stay in his capital, and he, poor man! being too much occupied with his own

affairs, to have much attention to bestow upon guests. He had taken occasion, however, to hint to my servant, that if I had any guns or pistols to dispose of, in exchange for good horses, he should be glad to see them; and as I should have had no objection to increase my number of horses, by the addition of one of good Koordish blood, I sent for his Highness's inspection a spare rifle and a double-barrelled pistol. Perhaps the hint had been dropped in the hope that some of these articles might find their way to him in the shape of a gift, certain it is that he did not approve of them in the way of exchange, or perhaps of the rate at which they were valued, for they were returned to me; upon which I sent a few smaller articles, such, as I believed, might prove acceptable as a present. They were received with a gracious speech; but a slight diminution of cordiality in my reception this day, led me to suspect that his Highness's expectations had not been quite satisfied, and deterred me from a repetition of the visit.

I was forced, also, this day, to submit to another of these mortifying disappointments which fall to the lot of travellers in disturbed countries such as this. There is an extensive plain about twenty to twenty-five miles from Suleimaniah, in which the long valley that takes the name of the town terminates, and which is said to contain certain antiquities, hitherto little, or not at all, explored by Europeans. Among other conjectures which give interest to this plain, is that of its being the site of a city called Siazurus by the ancients, the ruins

of which, to this day, are known to the natives by the name of Sheherazoor. You will at once see what a delicious field of speculation so close a resemblance of name affords to the etymologist. Had not my friend Macniell been carried off to England by duty, it was my hope to have enticed him thus far, and to have explored with him the antiquities of Sheherazoor. But when that project was knocked on the head, I promised to him and to myself, that I should go there if possible, and learn what was to be seen. On arriving here, I made application to the Pashah for permission and a guide to visit this part of his territories. At first he made no objection, beyond observing that there was nothing to be seen except some *tuppehs* (mounds), with bits of brick and pottery; neither buildings nor sculptured rocks: but he admitted that the mounds were very large, and that there were several groups of them at considerable distances from each other. This was not calculated to decrease my desire to see the place; judge, therefore, of my mortification when, on sending my servant to ask for a guide to this place, the Pashah said, if I was determined to go and see Sheherazoor, he would not forbid it; but that it would be quite contrary to his advice and wish, if I should make the attempt. That it was a great rendezvous of Eeliauts from all parts, and if, which God forbid, any accident were to befall *one of my horses*, he would be dishonoured by a circumstance which it would be out of his power to remedy or prevent. They were Koords, he said, —beasts,—and who could answer for what they

might do under the temptation of seeing, as they might imagine, great wealth falling in a manner into their grasp. In short, if go I would, it must be on my own responsibility, not his.

This is a strain of remonstrance the value of which is well known in the East, and which is freely made use of on all occasions where the object is to dissuade from, and prevent, an undertaking without appearing to oppose it actively. It has all the force of a command without the ungraciousness of one: it throws all responsibility on the head of the adventurer who should persevere in spite of fair warning, and exculpates those who warn him from the consequences of his rashness—consequences which all who are acquainted with the Oriental character well know would, in all probability, be accelerated by these very considerate advisers.

I had some reason to suspect that one cause of the Pashah's reluctance to my visiting Sheherazoor, was the fear he entertained that this visit might tend to defeat his endeavours to appear as poor as possible in the public eye, and particularly in that of the Azerbijân government: for that district is said to be one of the richest in his Pashalic; and it was probably by no means to his mind, that a stranger should have it in his power to report upon its productiveness. Be that as it may, it is certain that, after trying every method to effect an alteration in the Pashah's view of the case, and even applying through the general of the Persian troops stationed here,—a person who of necessity has great influence, and who laughed at all objections to the trip,—I was

forced to abandon my project. The Pashah insisted that the risk was so great, that he could not give his countenance to the attempt; and I was constrained to leave the adventure of Sheherazoor to be achieved by some more fortunate champion. I afterwards heard that the Pashah was so far in the right that, at this particular season, the place is full of thieves, who flock to it from the mountainous parts of Kermanshah, and Hamadân, and Ardelân; so that when robberies are committed, it is difficult to discover, and still more so to punish, the offenders.

In the course of conversation I heard but few more particulars respecting Sheherazoor, which briefly ran as follow:—The plain is bounded on the east and south by lofty and very rugged mountains, and it contains the sites, or remains, of five or six old towns or cities. One of these is called the *Kallah*, or fortress, and is a large lofty mound; then there are *Yasseen tuppeh, Goolumber, Arbut, Kharabeh,* and some others. The last appellation means merely *ruins.* I was informed by one or two persons, that stones of large size, bearing inscriptions in what they believe to be European (quære, Greek) letters, are occasionally dug up in these plains; and they say that a *Balcoos* (or high functionary) from Tabreez, on his way to Baghdad, saw one of the stones at Arbut. I heard, too, that another stone of this sort had been unearthed at *Burdaker*, a village at the foot of the south-western hills of this valley; and a Shiekh told me of a *Bootkhaneh*, or image temple, being found somewhere else in the plain, with a stone in it covered with characters which no one in the country

could decipher; thus it would appear, that this district may probably turn out a mine of unexplored antiquities. The whole plain below is said to be covered with vestiges of old buildings; but there seldom is anything found in them except bricks, pottery, &c.

This day also I had an interview with Mahomed Khan, *Serteep*, or general, of the Persian forces in Suleimaniah, this force consisting of something under four hundred men and eighty artillery-men, with five guns and two small mortars. It is a small command; but quite sufficient for the duty of devouring the country, and plundering when they cannot get enough otherwise. The fact is, that no part of Persia, or the neighbouring countries, is able, in its present state, to support the eating ulcer of a standing army. The prince endeavours to maintain this province against the Pashah of Baghdad, to whose government it properly belongs; and in attempting to do so with least expense to his own government, he ruins his acquisition. Mahomed Khan, however, were his own account to be taken, is a hero fit to maintain his master's power in arms against the world. Give him but means and permission, and he will extirpate the Meer of Rewandooz, and shut up the Pashah of Baghdad within his bounds of Mesopotamia. With only three hundred serbâz and half that number of horse, he swept the *Germiân*, or low country, if you will believe him, from Mosul to Khanakeen, from Kermanshah almost to the gates of Baghdad; and was only stopped from effecting something very tremendous indeed, by the Pashah sending him handsome presents and many conciliatory remonstrances. The

Serteep Khan, in truth, belongs to a very numerous class of Persians, so well described by Morier, who are the most arrant boasters in nature, and who are yet far from being deficient in courage, like the boasters of most other countries. They are diverting enough, if one has patience to get through the quantity of froth that floats on the good liquor below: and while I listened to the Khan's account of his own exploits—to the praises he had received from the King of Kings, with a khelut from his own majestic person—to the grand speeches of the Prince Royal, and his Royal Highness's *promise* of a gold-mounted sword, all from the same indubitable source of authority—to his bitter complaints of unrewarded merit—of having neither pay nor allowances, nor leave of absence to visit his family, (from which he had been separated five years,) but on the contrary, being about to be packed off upon some other expedition, because none could do the work so well as Mahomed Khan; in short, to the obvious truth that the government knew they had a good servant in the honest Serteep, but did not know how to use him —while I listened to all this, I picked up in the course of it much that was interesting, much that I wished to learn, about the country and its enemy the Rewandooz Pashah, and was also greatly amused—besides which, I think I pleased the honest Khan, who is really a hearty old cock, and takes his glass like any one of us.

November 1.—Zhallah, a miserable Koordish village of six or eight houses. I write, dear ——, at this wretched hole, because I have a spare hour

rather than because I have any great matter to tell. I left Suleimaniah yeterday, about eleven A.M., after being kept waiting, with beasts loaded and horses saddled, from seven in the morning; because the Pashah had not performed his promise of appointing me a guide towards Baghdad, which he had made to me the day before. Great men forget, and go to sleep, and no one would venture to awaken his Highness; so I sat in my harness, kicking my heels and fuming with wrath, until the usual hour for his Highness's coming forth from his chamber, when he told my servant that my business had escaped his memory! Thus does the inconsiderateness of the great entail inconvenience, and often loss, upon the little. Poor man! he had some excuse; for he was sadly embarrassed about his own affairs. I discovered afterwards that, on the day I had taken leave, he was sitting in perplexed conclave with his Agas, debating on how to provide certain necessaries in the shape of *soorsaut*, for a party of Persian troops, amongst which a sum of two hundred tomâns appeared to annoy them most — they could not, it was said, raise so much in Suleimaniah. This may account, perhaps, for some portion of the coldness which I thought appeared in the Pashah's demeanour on that occasion.

The guide, when he did appear, was a right good one, and his instructions were very precise as to my safety and comfort. He was to see me to Kufri, and answer for my safety, in Eastern style, with his head. Such are the forms of missives given as introductions to travellers from potentates to the

governors of places in their line of route, or of instructions to the guides who take them thither. Thus Abdoollah Khan, in writing by me to his brother Summud Khan, at Seradusht, and other heads of villages, desired that I might be sent through the bounds of their respective jurisdictions in safety and in honour; and that should a drop of blood be drawn from one of my horses, the forfeit should be five thousand tomâns.

November 3.—Under the guidance of Ul-Khider Aga, about eleven o'clock, we quitted Suleimaniah; and, crossing the plain, ascended the western hills which inclose the long valley of its own name, and which, including the plain of the Sheherazoor, may be seventy to eighty miles in length. From the summit of the pass, the eye ranged over a singularly rich country, inclosed between the range on which we stood, and a particularly craggy ridge at a considerable distance, which forms, in fact, the boundary between the high and low country. I should have called the intervening space a valley, because it was lower than the bounding hills; but it was, in truth, a mass of the most rugged hills and dales, spotted with oak bushes here and there, and with walnuts and fruit trees in places where villages had once been; and the vine, the pomegranate, and the sumach were still growing wild and luxuriant.

Across this rugged and difficult country we made our way to a village, Karadah, which was to be our lodging-place for the night, and the dwellings of which were as singularly scattered among cliffs of sand-stone and gravel, and clefts and ridges, as any

human abodes I ever saw. We were hospitably received, however, on the strength of the Pasha's order; but recommended to be strictly on our guard against thieves, who were represented as particularly numerous and active. This village has one other peculiarity,—out of from one hundred and fifty to two hundred houses of which it consists, no less than two-thirds are Jews. I find the Koords and Jews coalesce together wonderfully well.

I have already told you of my desire to rescue my friends the Koords from the imputation of deficiency in the imaginative faculties, and in those mental vagaries which give so much interest to the superstitions of other highlanders; and I never omitted any fair opportunity of making myself acquainted with their notions regarding ghosts, elves, and witches; but I have in all cases been wofully disappointed. In fact, were I to give implicit credit to those whom I have questioned on the subject, I should have to report the Koords as utterly void of anything in the shape of *faerie*, or even *goblinerie*—a sad blot in their national character! Finding my guide Ul-Khider Aga an intelligent and communicative fellow and able to speak tolerable Persian, I tried him on the subject, and put a number of questions to him in various shapes. But the result was altogether unsatisfactory. "What!" said I at length, "have you Koords no faith either in *Gins* or Peries, or ghôls or spirits?"—"Ahi, sir! what would you have?" was the reply, accompanied with a sort of apologetic shrug worthy of a French marquess of the *ancien régime*. "The Koords are asses, sir!—they have no

learning—they have never read any books to teach them; and what should *they* know of such matters? The Moollahs and Ahons, indeed, may know something regarding them; but what are you to look for from the rest?—in fine, they are Koords."

This was assuredly putting the subject in a new and amusing light—among us, ignorance is supposed to be one principal cause of superstition; but here it was attributed to knowledge and learning, while the want of it was imputed, as a defect, to the stupifying power of ignorance. It was a curious perversion of received principles. "Well," insisted I, "but have they no fear of evil spirits?—no belief in such things?"—"Nothing, the beasts!" replied he, in a tone of contempt; "not one word did they ever hear about such matters."—"Suppose," said I, desirous to alter the form of interrogation so as to catch any stray ideas on the subject—"suppose one of these Koords had occasion to pass through a burying-ground at midnight, would he have no reluctance to do so—no fears?"—"No; none at all. Why should he?" was the Aga's reply. "I don't mean of the living," insisted I, "but of the dead. Would he not fear that those who lay buried there might appear and do him harm?" The grin of absolute incomprehension which this question elicited from the muscles of the honest Aga's face, formed the most satisfactory reply possible to my questions; so I abandoned the inquiry in despair. Behold the effect of education, or rather the want of it, in the present case! a decided dread of ghosts and evil spirits is, I apprehend, by one means or other, made a part of

the education of every child of woman born in most known countries, as well as in our own dear land. Perhaps, could I have penetrated the harems and nurseries of the great, where, according to my friend Ul-Khider Aga, they are better informed, I might, among the ladies' *coteries*, have picked up some tales of Peries and enchanters; for these, no doubt, keep their ground among the Persians, as well as ghôls and gins, to a considerable extent, with the power of magic, virtue of the philosopher's stone, and such other fables. But I had no such good fortune; and so far as I am concerned, the degree of such belief in Koordistan, and the prevalence of these superstitions, must rest in darkness. If matters be as I have described, I cannot help regarding it as a foul blemish in the national character of the Koords.

One sort of superstition, however, does assuredly reign in Koordistan as well-as in most other places; for where is the belief that miraculous influences are inherent in certain objects or places not found to exist? Persia has its *Kudum-gâhs* and shrines, and miraculous fountains, and so has Koordistan. I have mentioned its Nezzer-kerdehs; and this day we found, scarcely a furlong from the city, a fine copious fountain bursting forth from the ground, and possessing, as we were assured, the virtue of curing all illnesses.—Alas! had we not that very moment passed through the two crowded burying-grounds, of which I have already spoken. Its well-head has been surrounded by a stone dike; and in the water thus inclosed, there are a number of fish which, as they are not disturbed by the inhabitants, swim about and

disport themselves fearlessly. The Russian soldiers sent hither from Azerbijân have, however, thinned their numbers, in spite of the denunciation of death which was pronounced by the people against the sacrilegious offence. They assert, however, that some of those who ate of them died in consequence.

I attacked our guide to-day on the subject of the Nezzer-gâhs; his explanation of them was simple enough. "When a sick person," said he, "in a dream, sees any of the saints or Imaums appearing as in a particular spot, he repairs thither; and if he receives the relief he expected he marks the place with such heaps of stones as you see, in token of his gratitude, and as a means of pointing out the holy spot to others. This has the effect of bringing other invalids, and even those who only pass by add their stone to the heaps, in token of respect; so that in time these become numerous and large. Those who have been benefited, too, frequently tear shreds from their shirts or trousers, and tie them, as you observe, to the bushes around." The graves of great men, or of persons murdered by robbers or by treachery, are not thus marked, he says, nor do they meet with this species of reverence; but a pole with a flag upon it, is occasionally raised, or some other signal is placed near, to point out to good Mussulmans the place where they should utter a prayer for the dead.

On the morrow, about seven, we started; and in our way passed the sites of several deserted villages, which had once given life and beauty to their own little nooks and vales; but population has fled from

this ill-fated country with prosperity and peace, leaving it a prey to tyrants and robbers. Of violence and feuds we had proof enough in our path this day: for in the course of twelve miles' distance we twice changed guards and guides; the inhabitants of one village not daring to enter the boundaries of the next; and our guide Ul-Khider Aga mentioned, as a curious circumstance, that the tribe of *Hamadavund*, which occupies some ground in this neighbourhood, and which he assured me did not number more than five or six hundred families, had rendered themselves so formidable to another tribe called the *Jaffs*, who can muster from ten to twelve thousand houses or tents, that not a Jaff dared to approach their precints—if he did, he was infallibly put to death; while the Hamadavunds, riding in parties of twenties and thirties, would go and plunder the Jaffs in their own houses. I think there must be some exaggeration in this statement, since the Jaffs can give the Pashah one thousand good horsemen in time of need. They inhabit chiefly about Sheherazoor, but are scattered all along the border line; one of these unhappy Jaffs took advantage of our convoy to carry his nobility safe out of the dangerous tracts.

Our last change of guards took place at Jefferân, close to the foot of the Suggramâh pass, one of the principal gates of Koordistan in this quarter; and as two stout robber-like *loons* accompanied us from thence, our guide observed that they were worth a score of horsemen. "The thieves are afraid of them, and will not dare to attack us; but we must

be on our guard nevertheless: let the baggage all keep close, and we will send one of these fellows on in front." Thus admonished, my fellows, who have a vile trick of lagging, but who also entertain a most reverend care for their own persons, closed up, and we soon reached the jaws of the pass.

These are very striking. The mountains of which I have spoken, as forming the boundary between the highlands of Koordistan and the plains of Assyria, which extends to the banks of the Tigris, here form a line which runs about S.E. and N.W. and are composed of many strata of limestone and calcareous conglomerate, with beds of gravel and indurated sand intervening. Of these strata, one of enormous size and great height rises on their north-eastern face; and running as straight as a line from forty to fifty miles, or more perhaps, separates them from the irregular valley (of which I have before spoken) at their feet. Its crest rises thin and sharp, broken into a variety of the most fantastic forms; and the angle of its *dip* (to use the technical phrase) is so near a right angle, and its face is so free from soil that, at a little distance, you would take it for an unbroken precipice of sheer hard rock. But continuous though it appears, the ledge is not unbroken. There are gaps in several places, made by the streams which arise in the range, and which have forced an outlet for their waters. Before one of these we now stood, collecting our forces, watering our horses, and tightening the bands of our loads, preparatory to grappling with the ascent which awaited us. The ledge or stratum

I have mentioned, narrowed to an apparent thickness of not many yards; and shooting up at once, like a gigantic flagstone, from the broken soil at its foot, had been shattered and severed to an extent in breadth, which above might be a hundred yards, but beneath was only sufficient for the passage of the stream. A bridge, under which the waters find their way, and which gives passengers and caravans the means of crossing the boundary, unites the dissevered stratum, the wounded sides of which rise in the most grotesque and jagged forms to the height of several hundred feet above. Just beyond this bridge, other strata, divided in the same manner, but whose edges protrude less prominently, rise in forms to the full as picturesque, and the whole was spotted with oak bushes, rich in their autumnal tints. Behind this barrier the mountain opened into a basin covered thickly with oak trees, which rose almost to its crest. It formed, on the whole, a wild and grotesque, rather than a magnificent landscape; for it lacked the moisture and consequent verdure which is so essential to beauty in mountain scenery: still it was striking; and I was glad that the short halt enabled me to take a rapid sketch of the lines of this singular natural gateway, which, by the natives, is well termed Derbend.

The ascent occupied us an hour and a half; and at length we stood upon the top, looking back to the wild mountainous country we had passed through, on the one hand, and on the other, over the lower lands we had yet to traverse before we could reach the

celebrated capital of the Caliphs: *lower*, I say, not level; for the country which now presented itself to our eyes, was anything but level, although in relative altitude far inferior to that which we had left. Low ridges of dark craggy hills rose in a succession, the termination of which the thickness of the atmosphere prevented us from discovering; and the space between them appeared, in like manner, to be intersected by smaller hillocks and ravines. It was a black and dreary prospect; yet this was the land of Assyria Proper, the cradle of mighty empires, and the birth-place of great monarchs in the olden time. Certainly no one, regarding it as we now did, could have imagined this scorched and rocky desert to be the proper country of the great Semiramis, or the luxurious Sardanapalus, however it might be the fit abode and domain of "Nimrod the mighty hunter;" yet such as we saw, is, I believe, the greater part of the country on the left bank of the Tigris near the hills, from Mosul, or Nineveh, the ancient Assyrian capital, down to Khaneken and Mendali, the southern boundary of the province so named. Around Mosul itself, as round Erbile, Kerkook, and several other considerable places, there is a circuit of much richer country; but a large proportion of the whole is desert, and scarcely fitted by nature to be otherwise.

A desperately rocky and stony descent, and a course of a few miles along the lower country I have described, took us to this place Zhallah; a most miserable place, as I have said; indeed a poorer

lodging place I have seldom seen. The first person who came forth to receive us, was a creature whose extraordinary appearance fixed the attention of us all, impressing us with that indefinable sensation which unnatural deformity, in any shape, almost instinctively produces at first sight. It was a human being of the size of a stout boy of twelve or fourteen years of age, perfectly well made in all respects, except the head. This member, on a second glance, was observed to be preternaturally small, and the moment the creature turned its face to us, we discovered at once that *sense*, if not soul, "was wanting there." It was the exact face of an ape or monkey; the compressed nose, the protruding mouth, the flat retreating brow, and projecting eyes — the small conical skull, with "woful lack of brains," all bore the stamp of the beast which mocketh the form of man. Forward it came the moment we approached; and seizing the bridle of one of the horses stood gazing, first at us, and then at the animal, with sundry grimaces, just as a monkey would have done, but uttering no intelligible sound; and the whole appearance and bearing of the poor idiot, who was almost entirely naked, suggested the idea of a brute, rather than that of a human being: it was an extremely painful sight.

We learned that, though so young in aspect, he was actually thirty years of age, and therefore of course come to his full size: there he remained unprogressive; a stunted fruitless being, alone in the world, for father or mother he had none: left to the compassion of his more fortunate fellow mortals,

and affording cause of thankfulness to those who enjoy an ampler share of the blessings which Providence had seen fit to deny him.

At this place, as at the munzil of the last night, we have been annoyed and disgusted by a dispute between our mehmandar and the villagers regarding a supply of corn and straw for our horses, and food for ourselves. I have more than once alluded to the custom of the country, by which foreigners of any distinction, or persons introduced by letters from friends or from the ruling authorities, are considered as public, not private guests, and are supplied with food and lodgings, nominally at the expense of government, or of the Khans and governors of the places in their line of route. This is a distinction which has far more inconvenience than advantage. Without it, it is true, a traveller would come little into contact with the better or upper classes of society, and might go through the country without having an opportunity of seeing anything of their manners and customs: but then it often proves an inconvenient shackle upon a man's progress and arrangements; for he cannot make those which may be necessary, either for proceeding, or for remaining at a place, without the acquiescence and assistance of his host, whose views differing, perhaps, from those of the traveller, may, with the best intentions in the world, be calculated to thwart or interfere with the traveller's most earnest wishes. Again, it is not over pleasant to find oneself thrust *nolens volens* into the house or on the charges of a stranger, whatever be his means or character. It

is a violence done both to one's independence and feelings of delicacy. A traveller unacquainted with the custom, shrinks from placing himself thus under an actual pecuniary obligation to one on whom he has no claim, and to whom he conceives he can make no fitting return; and this feeling is often aggravated by the unpleasant conviction that he really is a burthen, that his host can ill bear the expense—and by the most indelicate discussions which arise between that host and his own servants, as to the mode of entertainment and amount of provision required for their master and themselves. These discussions do not, of course, occur with well-bred people, or with men of liberal feelings and handsome fortune: but it becomes extremely painful to find yourself thrust upon poor villagers, on whom their richer master imposes the burthen of his ostentatious hospitality; for although it may have once been customary to admit such outlays, as offsets in account with the village, this is now seldom attended to in practice.

With the great, the guest finds a means of compensating the master by presents of money to his servants, which, if he be poor or avaricious, he unscrupulously shares with, or takes from them. If the sojourn has been long, and the expense consequently considerable, a present of some valuable article may be made to himself. But it is not so easy to reimburse the common villagers for such articles as they, upon compulsion, have provided; for if you do so openly, ten to one the guide or mehmandar who accompanies you, will wrest it

from them on his return; and if you give it secretly to any person of the place, it is more than probable that the *Kelkhodah*, or *Zabit*, or head man, whatever he be, will keep it all to himself, so that the true sufferers get nothing.

In the present case, I was the Pashah of Suleimaniah's guest. Etiquette required that I should continue so while within his territories; but as this would have been more onerous than agreeable, his villages were made to bear the expense; or even if that were charged to his Highness by his servants, the poor villagers would be none the better, as these servants would themselves, in that case, pocket the amount allowed by their master in account with his Ryots. Last night, after all that could be done by Ul-Khider Aga, the villagers would not produce grain enough for my horses, so I told my own servants to purchase it. Whether they did so or not I know not, but the money for it was paid by me. This evening there went through the village an absolute wail and lamentation—all the poor old wives of the five or six families it contained were deprived of their little hoards of grain; and one of them came to my lair, roaring and crying to reclaim a fowl, her only *chucky*, which had been forcibly abstracted to enter into the composition of my pillaw, and just saved it as the knife was at its throat. A few pence procured another, but the mehmandar stepped in; his honour was at stake to see me fed free of all cost, save what he himself might expect. So he forced the money from the unlucky owner of the old cock, and returned it to me. I made several

attempts to settle all difficulties by purchase of what was required; but, though money was secretly offered, the people were too much afraid of the mehmander to take it. At length, when all that could be squeezed out had been extracted, the only mode I had to avert the curses of the pillaged community, was to send a servant secretly and at night, to the houses of the sufferers, and to pay them for what had been taken, and a little more. This was trusting to the honesty of my own men — a frail reed no doubt; but there was no alternative, and, I believe, he must have executed his trust in part, at all events, as most of the people next morning, when I was mounting, came forward with kind wishes and farewells.

Kufri, November 4.—From Zhallah, the place of my last date, a march of from twenty-two to twenty-four miles, took us to Ibrahim Khanchee, the village of a Koordish chief, where we were to pass the night. The first five or six miles of our course led us over one of the most singularly stony tracts I ever saw; but the quantity of herbage that had nevertheless sprung up in spring and summer was astonishing. Part of this still remained, while the greater part having been burned, had left a wide black surface thickly speckled with grey stones — a most unlovely prospect.

We next ascended a very rocky hill of considerable height, the last of any consequence between us and the Tigris. It was bare of every thing except grass, but on its summit grew one magnificent spreading oak, the last of a forest which no doubt

once covered all this country. It owes its preservation to some tradition, which I could not exactly make out — it had probably been lost in the lapse of time; for now, all that could be gathered was, that travellers resting under its shade after the ascent are speedily relieved from their weariness, and strengthened to proceed — no extraordinary effect of rest and shade and free air after a tough pull up hill. It was surrounded by a wall of stones, and was called Daur-ul-Mandeh.

A few miles beyond the rocky descent of this hill, we stopped to breakfast at the miserable Koordish village of Jânreze, the dwelling of Selim Aga, chief of the Daloo Koords, a branch of the Bebahs of Suleimaniah. On approaching the village, we observed spears and saddled horses; and on arriving there found the Beg just preparing to go forth on a hunting-party, for he was surrounded by attendants equipped for the saddle, holding greyhounds in the leash, and hooded hawkes on the fist.

A word from the guide, who preceded us a few yards, procured us a courteous reception from this chief, who was a pleasing-looking person, just past the middle age, with a grizzled beard and mild, though firm features. He disclaimed the apology I had tendered for our intrusion, which had obviously interrupted his projected expedition; and swore by the head of the Pashah and his own eyes, (to which he said we had brought light and *de*light,) that we were welcome a thousand times. He only regretted that his accommodation was so poor, and his fare so bad, that he was ashamed of receiving

us in such a manner. "But we Koords," said he, "are rough fellows at best; we live in the plains or on the hills, and never, at any time, had much to boast of, and now the little we had is gone—what between Prince and Pashah we are in a fair way to want bread. See," continued he, taking up one of the black cakes they had just set before us, with a little sour milk, on a tray,—"see what we eat!—our horses and we fare just alike. Once we could give a guest a cake of good wheaten bread, but that is all over now, and we must content ourselves with *arzun*."

"Once," continued he, pursuing the subject as I drew him out by questions or monosyllables of acquiescence and sympathy,—"once we Koords were soldiers, and we thought of nothing but riding, and exercising with the spear and the sword, and of hunting and hawking, and such sports; for we had enough to live upon, and our Ryots cultivated our grounds for us: but now every man is forced to lay down sword and spear and take to the *jooft* (the pair of bullocks that drag the plough); and what is a soldier good for, sir, when once he has put his hand to the plough? but the Pashah and the Persians will have all their demands, and what is the consequence—what is left the Ryot but *ferâr* (flight), and away they go to Rewandooz or Kermanshah, or Mosul, or anywhere rather than stay where their burthens are intolerable—so the country becomes quite depopulated as you see."

The Beg was particularly inquisitive respecting the English and Russians, though his ignorance

regarding both was very great, and I left him, as I hope, well pleased with my visit; for, after gratifying him with a display of the power of my fire-arms, particularly of my small pistols, which, till he witnessed their effects, he had despised, I made him a present of some articles of English manufacture which took his fancy mightily, and we parted the best of friends.

"Now, this very mild and civil gentleman," said I to Ul-Khider Aga, our guide, as we rode away, "this Aga who has given us so kind a reception, and made us so welcome,—suppose neither you nor any other guide from Suleimaniah had been with us, and we had met with him and his train in the *Sahrah* (open plain), I suppose he would have made no scruple of attacking us, and robbing us, if he could?"—"By the head of Suleiman Pashah," replied the guide, laughing heartily,—"by your own life, sir, you seem to know the man as well as I do myself—you have hit it exactly. Selim Aga is just the man for such a job. He would eat bread with you as your host, and after the *Khoosh Amedeed*, and *Khodah Hafiz* (the welcome and farewell), he would tie up his beard, alter his turban, and disguise himself and his people so that you should not know them, and gallop off ahead and waylay and strip you all naked, and leave you there. He is the completest *napák* (scoundrel) in all Koordistan—the most remorseless ruffian. Why, sir, that fellow has stripped women and left them naked in the desert—he would take from them their shift, if it were worth threepence, even if they had not another rag."

"And is not this held infamous even in Koordistan?" asked I. "So infamous," replied the guide, "that I have not words to tell you how bad it is in our estimation. But this Selim Aga is a beast, that has neither shame nor feeling. He has some forty to fifty horsemen, and with these he stops the road, so that neither caravan nor pilgrim to Kerbelah can pass; and all whom he catches he strips."—"But what says the Pashah to all this?" demanded I. "Is not the Aga his Highness's servant?"—"To be sure he is," replied Ul-Khider, "and the Pashah 'burns his father' when he does such things: but what shall I say, sir? the Pashah has enough to do at home—we never keep a governor long enough in his place to get so firm and strong as to keep the country perfectly quiet; so we can but do our best;—but as for this Selim Aga, he is the most unprincipled rascal:—he showed you his arm, sir;" (it was covered with a herpetic eruption, which he wished me to cure)—"we say here, sir, that this was sent by God as a punishment for his misdeeds; and I believe it is the case. May his father's tomb be defiled!"

"Well," said I, "but this Roostum Aga, to whose house we are going this night, *inshallah!* what sort of a fellow may he be? Would he not do much the same as Selim Aga—would not he also strip us if he could?"—"There is a little of that sort, indeed, sir," replied he. "Roostum Aga is a powerful man; he is chief of the Zengeneh tribe; but *ulhumdulillah!* praise be to God! he is Suleiman Pashah's servant, nevertheless, and, *inshallah!* he shall send you safe to Kufri."—"Inshallah, inshallah!" replied I; "but

from what I see, it seems plain that every one of these chiefs of *Teerehs* (divisions of tribes) in this country would play the same game — that is, they would stop, rob, and strip us, or any one they meet with in the sahrah without a guide or means of resistance."—"Ahah *Barikillah!* bravo, sir! you have said the truth—not one of them is to be trusted. After all, they are but Koords, and we are all of us brutes. But it was not always so, sir: in the days of Abdul Rahman Pashah, the father of Suleiman and Mahmood Pashahs, there was nothing of all this; you might have walked with jewels on your head and gold in your hand from one end of the Pashalic to the other. From Seradusht to Kufri—from Koee to Bauna, and no one would have asked you where you were going;—it was *Selaam-ul-Aleekoom* and *Aleekoom-is-salaam:* but it is the quarrels between the brothers that have brought on our misfortunes and ruined the country. Sometimes it is Mahmood and sometimes it is Suleiman—never the same master three years together. And then in come the *Ajemees* (Persians) to settle the disputes, and they take the country to themselves and eat it up with their army, living at free quarters. Next comes the plague, and then the famine, which together sweep away the people, but leave us our enemies. Then, when a robbery occurs, each party charges it on the other, its opponent. The servants of Suleiman impute the outrage to those of Mahmood, while those of Mahmood fling back the charge on the people of Suleiman; and truth to say, the Pashah has not power to punish all

he may see or know to be in fault, nor to control the ill-disposed; for as the Persians devour everything they can lay hold of, the honest men are forced to run away, and the country is left to the thieves."

There was nothing to be said against this plain and too true statement, so on we rode to the village of Ibrahim Khanchee.

We were now fairly in the country of ancient Assyria, which indeed we had entered when crossing the last gorge by which we descended to the plain of Suleimaniah. And verily there was little in the aspect of the country to suggest ideas of great and powerful empires. Even one's reason refused to be persuaded that the wide tracts of gravel and black earthy hillocks,—with the rock cropping out from their sides and summits, and intersected by dry ravines, which lay stretched far and near around us, all obviously unproductive, except of a scanty pasturage—could ever have been the theatre of those mighty events which history relates of the empire of Semiramis and her descendants, where innumerable hosts of warriors struggled for victory and boundless dominion! In fact, the mind while contemplating scenes which have been the cradles of greatness, is apt to labour under a striking fallacy. It attributes to the spot of ground which may have given birth to the founder of a dynasty, the splendour of that dynasty itself. Thus Alexander, conqueror of the world, is still Alexander of Macedon. Mahmood, the conqueror of India as well as central Asia, is still Mahmood of Ghiznee;

and the empires of Babylon, of Nineveh, and of Persia, still retain the names of their respective dynasties or of the parent state, while their greatness, their riches, and their splendour were derived, not from the petty provinces from whence their founders issued, but from those rich and vast countries which were subdued by those founders or their successors. It was not Macedonia alone, nor Ghiznee, nor Mesopotamia—fertile and prolific though it was, nor rocky Assyria, nor barren Persia, which furnished that wealth and supported that splendour; but the wide realms of Asia, which fell a prey in turn to each comparatively ephemeral sovereign of the period. Thus no one can conceive, that the rugged arid tracts on which we were treading could ever in themselves have been either productive or populous; but both these and the Koordish mountains that frown over them did formerly, no doubt, as now they might, afford supplies of hardy soldiers, who under a bold leader, such as the "mighty hunter," were admirably qualified to overrun and possess themselves of the more fertile plains and provinces adjoining them, and thus acquire the means of consolidating those fabrics of power which are the wonder of later times. What mattered it to Nineveh—surrounded by her multitude of gardens, watered by the Tigris, the Ghazer-su, and the Zâb, with the fat plains of Mesopotamia, the fertile valleys of Syria, the rich and varied realms of Armenia and Asia Minor to satiate the luxury of even a Sardanapalus,—whether a black and howling wilderness stretched on one side almost up to the very envi-

rons of the capital? but surely this same wilderness has little to do, except in name, with the mighty *empire* of Assyria!

Whatever may have been the virtues or endowments of these old Assyrian warriors, their successors, like the dwellings they inhabit, we found to be rude enough in all conscience. Ibrahim Khanchee, the abode of Roostum Aga, was a collection of about a hundred huts constructed of mud and grass; and the *dewan khaneh*, as it was called, of the chief, into which we were introduced, was in so frail a state that I almost expected, should a breeze of wind or shower of rain come on in the night, that we should be buried in its ruins. We were received by his son, a fine young lad, but inquisitive and far from over bashful, and, like them all, with fingers like fish-hooks, laying hold of every thing they come near. Roostum Aga himself came in the evening, a jolly, good-humoured, dark-looking man, with a round face and a hardy sort of "devil may care" laugh, who received us with boisterous civility. He was one of that kind of savages who are wonderfully good when they are not "*countered*," as the Scottish nurse said of her spoiled child — all smiles when he had his own way; but the sudden drawing up, and the cloud on his face the moment he was contradicted, seemed intended to hint, "I can be a devil if I please, and a tyrant when I will."

We were a little reserved at first; but as I make it a point on all occasions to conciliate as much as I can, we soon came to an understanding, and fell into a familiar chat; but he commenced after a

curious fashion. Almost as soon as compliments were over, he called to my servant, who was standing in the room, and asked, "What is your name? —where are you from?—how long have you been with the Saheb? Do you receive wages, or did any one send you with him?—are you pleased with his service?" and, after receiving replies to all these important queries, he added, in a good-humoured but blunt way, which showed him to be unaccustomed to denial, "What pistols has your master?—bring them to me." I made him a sign to bring the pistols, which were instantly in the chief's hands. When he saw that the holster pistols had percussion locks, he threw them aside with contempt, saying, "I know these things; two of your *taifeh* (tribe) came here some time ago and had such. They offered me a pair, but I would not have them: of what use would they be to me? These are what I like;" and he produced a good but much-worn pair of Mortimer's duelling-pistols. "If you had had any of this kind," said he, "I should have got them from you; but these of yours are *pooch* (trash). Now, what else have you? —the things I am fond of are pistols, shawls, and coats, such as this;" and he pointed to his own cloak, which was of scarlet cloth. "Have you any cashmere shawls? like this—see!" pointing to an old one, fringed with silver, on his head. I told him that, being travellers as we were, going post to Baghdad, it was not likely we should have such things with us, nor had I: in fact, I had nothing but my own bed and body clothes. "What! nothing?"

said. he. "See what these Ferengees I spoke of, gave me among many other things," and he produced a good sportsman's knife of English manufacture. "Look at it," said he; "it is of your country; but I must go to prayers—never mind me." So he spread his carpet on the numud beside me and commenced his *numâz;* but by much the greater part of the time was passed in questions or orders to his people, and inquiries of my own servant about myself, all close at my own ear.

At last he finished and turned to me. I had in the mean time taken out a capital clasp-knife, which I had set aside for myself, and which I now presented to him as a weapon of great use, either for peaceful or warlike purposes, and of the best manufacture of England. It was graciously received, and appeared to open his heart a little, for he became quite facetious. "Where got you this *numud?*" demanded he, pointing to the felt carpet on which we were both then sitting. "What did you give for it?" I told him. "You have been cheated," said he; "it is a poor affair — it is not worth more than half that sum at Baghdad—capital *numuds* and carpets to be found there." I asked him whether his tribe made carpets. "They have begun to do so," said he, "and there is an excellent one here now." I asked to see it, observing, that if for sale, and that I approved of it, I should purchase it. "No, no," said he; "if you like it, it is yours — I will find the money."—"By no means, Aga," replied I; "that was far from my meaning —I really do wish to purchase such things."—

"Ah," said he, laughing, "I see; you are afraid that if I give it to you, you will have to give me something; but no, you are mistaken: I want nothing."—"Nay, Aga, you yourself are wrong there," said I. "What I have to give, I give with pleasure; but a traveller is seldom well provided with spare articles, and it is contrary to my custom and wishes to receive valuable presents without return."

A good deal in the same strain passed between us, from which I gathered clearly enough that the Beg was fishing. He alluded several times to the handsome presents he had received from other travellers, and took occasion to mention the articles which would be most acceptable; and as I was desirous to make as many friends as I could for the benefit of future passers by, at a moderate expense, I took the opportunity of his abusing a blunt pair of Persian scissors with which he was in vain attempting to cut a piece of paper, to present him an excellent pair of English ones. This increased the satisfaction he seemed to receive from my previous gift of the knife, and drew forth a long eulogium upon the English and their excellent commodities; but I heard no more of the carpet.

The next subject he attacked me about was eating the flesh of swine. "I saw," said he, "a whole herd of them as I returned just now; but the sun was low, otherwise I should have killed one or two."—"Why should you have done so?" asked I; "you do not eat them, do you?"—"*Astafferullah!*—God forbid!" exclaimed he; "they are *nejes* (un-

clean)."—"True," replied I; "but you eat hares, don't you?"—"By all means," replied he; "and capital things they are for a stew."—"And foxes too?" said I, interrogatively.—"No, no," replied he; "it is only a few poor devils who eat them."—"Well; but both *are* eaten here," insisted I, "and both are forbidden by your law." The Beg could not deny either point. "Well now," said I, "we won't talk about the lawfulness of the thing; they are all alike forbidden meats, and there's an end of it. But let us come to the reason of the thing. What do wild hogs live on, Aga?"—"Why, on grass, acorns, and roots," replied he.—"Good; there is nothing unclean or disgusting in that."—"No; by no means."—"Well, what do foxes feed upon, and herons, and the other large waterfowl you eat?"—"Why, the foxes eat birds and small beasts, and the others eat fish and worms."—"Well, then," said I, "which is the cleanest animal?"—"He says the truth," observed the Beg, turning to some of those about him.—"Wullah! if I had known you were coming here, I should certainly have killed one of these wild hogs and brought it to you."—"No, no, Aga," said I, "that would never do. When I am with Mussulmauns, I neither eat hogs nor drink wine. Why should I do what would be disagreeable to my hosts."—"Not at all, not at all," said he somewhat hastily; "your own people should have cooked it; and as for wine, will you have any? I can give you both wine and brandy." I excused myself from either, a good deal to the honest Beg's disappointment, I suspect, though he swore that he had given up

drinking entirely — he had made the *tovah*, or vow of repentance, and renunciation for the sin; but the joke about the hog's flesh was kept up all the night. When the pillaw came in, my portion was, as usual, in a separate dish, and he swore he had ordered his cook to put pork in it for me, and that pork it was; and afterwards, when we drank tea out of my cups, he affected to wash the one he used before drinking out of it. "Ah!" said I in reply, "this is all very fine, Aga, in my presence; but I have strong doubts upon the subject. I would not be a piece of one of these same fine fat hogs you saw to-day, and in your way, just arriving at your munzil after a long march."—"No, no; by your head," replied he, laughing, "I assure you we don't eat such things."—"Well, you say so; but if *you* do not, Aga, many do. There now, that fierce-looking old fellow opposite me," pointing to a most truculent-looking, white-bearded, old Koord; "I would take my oath that there are three things he is a capital hand at—fighting, drinking wine, and eating pork." "He! the old fool," said the Beg, laughing still more heartily, "he fight! I don't believe he has a bit of liver at all—if he has, it has not a drop of red blood in it: he would not fight a child. Do you know that I cannot depend upon that old Resoul Aga even to obey orders; when I tell him to push his horse one way, he always spurs him another, and that is always *away* from the enemy: is it not, Resoul? For the wine, he only drinks it whenever he can get it; and as for the pork, *Wullah Billah!* I believe he would eat

its father;" and so we went on all in excellent humour.

The conversation next turned on ghosts and goblins, and to my disappointment the Beg confirmed the neglect of this part of Koordish education. I explained to him our traditions concerning ghosts, which teach the superstitious to believe that the spirits of murdered persons appear on earth, either hovering about the place of their murder, or to others, to tell the crime and point out the perpetrator, or to the murderer himself, to drive him to confession or distraction. He was much struck with this idea, and exclaimed, *La-illah-il-ullah!* "if such were the case here, who would ever commit murder or robbery!" a pretty pertinent commentary on the moral principle which doubtless first gave origin to the belief among ourselves.

The fact is, that Roostum Aga, with all his roughness and predatory habits, has a plentiful share of superstitions, if not of religious scruples —a very common case with rogues and plunderers. He asked me anxiously whether the buffalo-horn handle of the clasp knife I had given him were not *negis*, or unclean? if he might say his prayers with it on his person? Perhaps you do not know that all Mahomedans, when they say their prayers, *ought* to lay aside every weapon of war, and every article of gold or silver, and even of silk, from their attire, as being contrary to the humble tone of mind in which addresses to the Deity should be uttered. Even the Beg's joke about the hog's flesh had something of a scruple in it, and he would not even

mount his horse to go on a party of robbery and murder without ejaculating "*Bismillah irruhman irruheem!*"—"In the name of the most merçiful and most compassionate God!" Thus the Wahabee cuts the throat of the prisoner who has submitted, to the prayer or ejaculation of "*Allah-hu-Akber!*" "God is great!" and thus the holy robber, with his bloody hands filled with the booty of his last prey, kneels before the image of the Virgin, and offers part of the unclean spoil, together with his prayers, to "The Mother of God!"

Assuredly the day of repentance, in the matter of bloodshed and plunder, does not appear as yet to have come to Roostum Beg. He dwelt upon the many frays he had been in, and the plunder he had taken, with a zest and eagerness which showed how strong the devil was yet in him. He told me he had been wounded at least a dozen times, in spite of the best of armour. "I have armour of every sort," said he, "and I used to wear it always; but I have learned to put very little trust in it—my trust is in Heaven!" said he, with as firm and satisfied a tone as if his cause was the most righteous upon earth. He joined with others in lamenting the evil days on which the present race of Koords had fallen. "The golden times of Kqordistan are gone," he said; "ride over the country, and what brilliance, what spirit will you find? all the good horsemen and stout soldiers are dead, or have fled the land, or have taken to the plough per force, to make as much money as will pay the Pashah and feed their wives and children;

and what is a soldier good for when once he has touched a plough?" I agreed with him in thinking that the country had lost all appearance of prosperity, and the people all spirit and brilliancy: but it did not appear that all had taken to peaceful occupations; the dangers of the road sufficiently proved that. "Ah!" said he, "that is all a trifle; a few *looties* here and there,—no gallant bands of horsemen now; but rest contented, I, Roostum Beg, am pledge for your safety; nothing shall touch you between this and Kufri—you are a good fellow—an excellent fellow—I like you—by your head I do!—you are not like some of your countrymen I have seen, who could do nothing but eat and sleep; your eyes are open and you have sense: be satisfied, to-morrow you shall see Kufri in safety."

I dare say you have now enough and to spare of Roostum Aga; but as an excellent specimen of the wild Koordish chief, I have been tempted to describe him at full length. In the morning he gave us a guide and a letter to Kufri, swearing once more by his head and eyes, and by the life of his guest, that that life was as the light of his soul, and that not a hair of his head should be touched so far as his word was obeyed. Here, too, for the present, we take leave of our rough friends the Koords, of whom likewise you may, perhaps, be nearly tired. Like other men and nations, they are creatures of circumstance and education, but possessed of natural qualities that might be turned to good account. Bold they are, and hospitable after a fashion; but this last virtue has been sadly dimmed

of late years by poverty and oppression. Like most pastoral and patriarchal people, they are distinguished by a strong love of kindred and tribe, which renders them fierce and violent in their quarrels, each adopting the feud which has arisen from offence to a clansman, and perpetuating it by a series of remorseless murders. Far from cruel by nature, these feuds, and their fondness for war and warlike occupations, tend to make them reckless of spilling blood, and cause them to hold human life at less account than it is rated at in more peaceful countries; yet their wars are not deadly, and the very consciousness of the interminable consequences of shedding blood, operates as a wholesome restraint upon their passions, when mere feelings of pity or a moral sense of crime, would be too weak to prevent murder. Such, in fact, is ever the case among semi-barbarous tribes, when no superior and competent power is present to exercise a proper control; and, as I have already hinted, if any one would form a pretty close idea of the Koords, the Toorkmans, or even the Arabs, so far as social intercourse and strife are concerned, let him turn to the condition of our own Scottish highlands some couple of centuries ago.

In person the Koords are well made and active; differing perhaps but little essentially from their neighbours the Persians. But the national features are strikingly peculiar. The cast of countenance is sharp, the form of the face oval, the profile remarkable from the prominence of the bones of the nose, and the comparative retrocession of the

mouth and chin, which communicate to its outline a semicircular form. The eyes are deep set, dark, quick, and intelligent; the brow ample and clear, but somewhat retreating, completing the shape assigned to the profile; and the general mould of the features by far more delicate than those of the Persians, which usually are somewhat too strong. In Koordistan you would look in vain for a snub nose. The *petite nez retroussé* is unknown among them. The mouth is almost always well-formed, and the teeth fine. The hands and fingers small and slender. In short, there is something of elegance about the Koordish form, which would mark them as a handsome nation in any part of the world.

The same remarks apply to the women, so far as I have had opportunities of observation. When young they are exceedingly pretty; but when old, or even at what we should call maturity, the sharp prominence of feature, which characterises them in common with the men, is assuredly unfavourable to beauty, and they soon appear old and withered. I had sufficient opportunities for observing these particulars, as they do not wear veils like the Persian women, the utmost practised in this way being to bring the end of the handkerchief, with which their heads are covered, across their mouths and chins; but I regret that it is little in my power to follow them into their privacy, and describe them in their domestic duties. From what I do know, however, I have reason to believe that their life, duties, and occupations, resemble, in all respects,

closely those of the tribes of Persia. The women of the richer classes, living in towns, remain in the harems of their husbands or fathers, and veil when they go abroad. The poorer, and even those of the higher orders, living in villages or tents, perform the same duties as I have described those of the Toorkomans and Eeliauts to do.

Behold us then at Kufri, having passed over about twenty-five miles of dreary uninteresting country, resembling much the former stage, only that the plains became more extensive in proportion to the heights; but the general conflagration to which they appear to have been subjected, imparted a peculiarly forbidding aspect to the whole surface, nor did we see a single village the whole way. Human beings we were by no means desirous of seeing, as none likely to be met with in these wilds could be desirable companions.

Kufri lies at the entrance of a gorge in a range of hills, which are low, but as naked and barren as sheer rock and stones can make them. They consist of the crests of very remarkable strata, which rise above the plain, scathed, as it were, by primeval fire; but the town itself, which is walled around, presented a pleasant and inviting aspect, as seen through the opening by which we approached it. The date-trees rising above the walls, the first we had seen, proclaimed our entry into *Arabestán;* and the change in the costume and aspect of the people, confirmed the fact that we were now within the Turkish dominions.

We made our way to a house, which we under-

stood to be our munzil, outside of which, upon some carpets, sat several grave-looking Osmanlees, who welcomed us with courteous gestures, but with few words. The servants were Turks, and everything around us announced a change of country as well as of people. This evening, for the first time, there was no dispute about the corn and straw for the horses, or provision for ourselves. Everything was furnished, fully and freely, without either word or question. There is only one custom disgusting: instead of waiting for what your courtesy may offer, the servants, one and all, rush forward at your departure, to demand, rather than beg for, *bukhsheesh* (presents): on this occasion even the very keeper of the prison, I know not on what pretence, was among the applicants. I found the only way was to give at once what I considered sufficient, and then to disregard all further petitioners or petitions.

LETTER VII.

Karateppeh.—An Alarm.—Hamrine Hills.—Adinakewy and Joongeer Aga.—Arab Guides—and Camps.—Anxiety.—Traces of former Prosperity.—Hûp-hûp.—Desert Partridges.—Plain of Baghdad.—Unpleasant Intelligence.—Baghdad beleaguered.—Stoppage at the Gate.—Reach the Residency.

Baghdad, 13th November.

HERE we are, dear ——, at length in the great city of Baghdad, the capital of the Caliphs—the seat of Haroon-ul-Rasheed and his beautiful Zobeede—of Jaffer the Bermecide, and Mesrour the chief Eunuch, and all the Abul Hassans, and Ali Khojia's, and ladies, and porters, and enchanters, and enchantresses of the "Arabian Nights' Entertainments:" alas! how fallen; but let us not anticipate. Our host, Selim Aga of Kufri, furnished us with a guide to the next stage, but dissuaded us so strongly from commencing our journey before morning, that we did not set out till the dawn had broken. It was, in truth, a rather awkward stage; for, lying just upon the border between Koord and Arab, the road was liable to pillage from both parties, while to detect the culprits might be very difficult; and I half expected a rencontre with our old friends, Selim Beg or Roostum Aga, who, now we were clear of their respective dominions, might take

a fancy to a more accurate examination of my property than could be effected while in their hands. There were many points favourable to ambuscade, particularly the bed of a reedy river, and some ravines in a range of low hills which we had to cross; and our guide made us prime our fire-arms and ride prepared to use them. We escaped clear, however, as on many former occasions, and reached Karateppeh, a small and squalid village, after a march of twenty miles. That there was some cause, however, for the caution of our host was proved by the fact, that a caravan had been plundered but a week or ten days before, at the river I have mentioned; upon hearing which, Selim Aga of Kufri, mounted, as he told us, with fifteen horsemen, overtook and cut up some six or seven of the robbers and took an equal number of them prisoners. By way of confirmation, I suppose, he showed us the horse on which he had performed this feat. It was a beautiful bay, four years old, for which, he told me, he had refused 100 tomâns, that is 50*l.* sterling. I would readily have given him that sum if he would have parted with the noble animal.

This night also I purposed starting for a long march; but Allee Aga, the Zabit of the village, declared that he could not let me start before morning, for the same cause as stated by our last host—the insecurity of the road. I compromised the matter by mounting at half-past two in the morning; but we might as well have stayed till dawn for all the progress we made. Scarcely had we proceeded half a mile from

the village when, missing an article of baggage, we despatched a horseman back for it. On making inquiry at our lodging, the owner denied all knowledge of it; "but," added he, "there were ten horsemen passed this door just after you left it, and perhaps they may have taken it."—"Ten horsemen!" said our messenger in alarm; "from whence did they come, and where were they going?"—"That I don't know," replied the man; "but they appeared to be following you."

This was far from pleasant tidings, and they had an obviously sedative effect upon our guide, who immediately struck out of the regular road, and led us for more than an hour through the open plain, which, however, was so free from obstacles that we proceeded without difficulty. At length, however, he halted and said: "You must be aware that I have been leading you along by-paths hitherto; and I must now tell you that I am by no means satisfied about these horsemen who were seen at the village following us. If they are enemies, there is a place a little way on by which we must pass, and where they will wait for us—we must have daylight to do it by; so I think we should remain quietly here till dawn: dismount, and lie down—don't speak a word, and, God is great! we may escape them." Here my servants broke in, and took up the discourse in the usual boasting tone of Persians. Why should we halt and lose time?—what cared they for Koords or Arabs, with "burned fathers"?—dogs! beasts!—who were they, that they should stop us?—let them

try, and they should be taught that there were Iraunees there—men who only valued their lives as they could protect their master. What were ten—what were fifty Arabs?—*Goor-e-pidurish!* and so forth. But, as I observed that the guide was really alarmed, I overruled this burst of heroism, and we accordingly remained *perdue* for a full hour, and very cold and disagreeable it was.

About that time the guide, either struck with a fresh view of the subject, or taking heart of grace, agreed to proceed; and we did so, keeping the side of a small deep river, which took a very winding course. We passed an Arab encampment, luckily for us on the other side of the stream; the dogs of which, roused, set up a furious chorus of barking; but we were not otherwise disturbed. A weary while it was till daylight broke, when, crossing the stream, we held our way on to a low tract of mounds, or rising grounds, which in this place skirted the plain. These were the Hamrine hills, which are a branch of those that stretch down from Koordistan, and join the greater Gordian range. A long and dreary ride through the intricate and arid ravines which furrow these hills, was terminated by an equally fatiguing progress over a wide unvaried plain, which stretches from their feet to the Tigris, and along its banks to the Persian Gulf; for we had now cleared the last rocky boundary, and were in the great unbroken alluvium, formed by the Tigris and Euphrates. The Caravanserai of Dellee Abbas, and the date-trees of several villages were now descried in the far horizon,

and towards the most northerly of these we now bent our way.

It proved to be Adinakewy; a fine village, and our munzil for the night, where we were extremely well received by the old Zabit (chief), Joongeer Khan, a right honest and hospitable old Turk. There was no stint of food here for horse or man. Our servants had full permission to take what they required both for themselves and the cattle; and the Zabit himself took care I should have a capital pillaw to my own share of the spoil. This Joongeer Aga was by birth a Georgian, who, when a boy, in the days of Aga Mahomed Khan, had been taken prisoner, and had risen in the service of several masters, till at length he had become renter of this village, for which he pays to government some two or three hundred tomâns. Like others, he complains of the hardship of the times, and of the tyranny and extortion of the government; but really there seemed in his house to be no want of comfort, and what he had he appeared heartily well disposed to share with others. To such a man it was a pleasant duty to prove that English travellers were not inclined to be ungrateful for attention, and the present which I made him accordingly rather exceeded than fell short, I am inclined to believe, of his expectations. I must say that the Turks hitherto have far outshone the Persians, or even the Koords, in their character of hosts, both in point of courtesy and liberality. There is but one point which, in some cases, I could have wished amended:—they consider it a part of their hospitable

duty to bestow much of their company upon their guest, which, should he understand their language, may be all very well, as it may afford opportunity for gaining much good information; but if, as in my own case, he has the misfortune not to understand their language, it becomes a serious inconvenience; for their presence prevents him from doing a variety of things which he otherwise would be glad to get out of hand during the time thus lost.

In the present case, by means of one of my servants, who acted as interpreter, I managed to scrape a little information from my friend Joongeer Aga, who was as communicative as he was courteous and kind. I learned somewhat of the improvident course which the government of Baghdad pursue in farming out the lands of the Pashalic, and received confirmation of that confusion and disorder, and consequent depopulation, to which our own eyes and ears had borne testimony ever since we had entered its limits.

Such was our good host's opinion of the disorders and dangers of the road, even so near the capital as we now were, that he absolutely refused to permit of our proceeding that night, saying that for a thousand tomâns he would not have us start before daylight, as I, always anxious to push on, wished to have done as soon as our horses were rested. The whole country, he declared, was overrun with roving Arabs, and that moving in the dark, or without suitable guides, would be madness. Dependent as we were on him for a guide, without

which to proceed in a country intersected by canals, and without any regular roads, would be impossible, we had but to acquiesce, stipulating only for an early hour of starting.

To furnish proper guides, however, appeared to be a matter more easily talked of than performed. The important personage who was to conduct us did not make his appearance till half-past six, and there was a strange shuffling about who was to go and who was not to go, which I did not understand; but at last we got into motion, and, about a mile from the village, reached an Arab encampment, where our guide came to a halt, to procure the escort of two horsemen as he told us, without whose presence he could not advance a step—such were his orders. It now appeared that our host had deemed the escort of Arabs safer than that of Osmanlees, particularly as there was great alarm caused in the country by the arrival of a large body of Arabs, who had encamped on the low grounds between us and the Tigris. So away went our guide with one of my servants to negotiate this matter with the Arabs, whose tents we had reached, leaving us sitting on horseback on the bank of a canal. They were all sitting in *quorum* before their tents, smoking their pipes and drinking their coffee, and at every tent-door stood a fine mare, ready saddled, with the owner's spear stuck in the ground beside her. I was told that this camp could turn out forty or fifty good and well-mounted horsemen; but whether from unwillingness to engage in the service, or from habitual indolence, it

was a full hour before we could obtain *one;* a loss of time which was sufficiently provoking.

The amount of delay, however, was, I presume, made commensurate to the dignity of the result—the servant returned accompanied by two sheikhs or elders of the camp; nothing less, they declared, would satisfy them of the security of so precious a charge, and one of them, galloping up to me, shaking his spear, as might have been thought by a stranger, with very threatening action, swore by his head, that whoever or whatever might be in the way, *he* would see me safe to my munzil. All this sounded very well, though I own I had my suspicions that it was rather the expected present, seen in dim perspective, than anxiety on our account, that had moved the two sheikhs to mount their steeds.

On, then, we fared; but I was somewhat startled at finding that our village guide did not intend to accompany us further. But to my remonstrances he replied, that his presence was utterly useless—that the Arabs were not only sufficient, but the only guides who could take us through the country. The worst was, that these guides understood nothing but Arabic, of which we were quite ignorant; but there was no help for it, so we rode on through the village cultivation, among dry and wet watercourses, until coming upon a deep, though narrow stream of water, which I afterwards discovered to be the Khâlis canal, we continued upon its winding bank for many miles.

A fursuck from the village we passed the station of Dellee Abbas, with a bridge over the Khâlis,

which, to my surprise, our guides left upon our left, keeping the northern bank. I was not aware till afterwards of the cause of this seeming deviation from the direct route. We then passed several villages watered by the Khâlis, but, as it appeared to me, inhabited by Arabs, and, all but one, on the southern bank. Near one of these there was a very large Arab encampment, between which and ourselves I was right well pleased to see the river intervening. There were other camps scattered far and near to a great distance, and it was obviously to avoid these that our guides had so long held the northern bank.

Just before reaching this village one of my servants called me back from the front of our line of march to watch, as he said, the two guides, whose conduct had become strange, if not absolutely suspicious. They had been joined by another Arab, mounted on a fine spanking mare, and it had been intimated to us that this was *another* Sheikh, whose anxiety for our safety would not permit him to stay behind: but now he went off, as was said, because he found the country disturbed, and could not permit the camp to be left without one of its three elders to look after its interests in case of accidents — the hesitation .and hanging back of the remaining two guides was what had alarmed my servant. On remonstrating with them for their inattention, they explained, with considerable trepidation, that there were many Arabs, their enemies, abroad; and made sundry strong demands for *bukhsheesh*, or presents. Unable to remonstrate, or explain my meaning effec-

tually, I thought it best to make a show of firmness and indignation, while one of my servants threw in a coaxing word or two: between the two we induced them to proceed, which they did with great reluctance, intonating many an *inshallah!* and evincing many symptoms of alarm. All this was ill-calculated to quiet the fears of my own people, who could not conceal their uneasiness at the thoughts of being stripped and beaten, if not put to death—an alarm which the approach of several horsemen who rode up to the side of the canal with no friendly aspect, and of more than one small body of Arabs scouring the country at a distance, did not tend to decrease. Nor was my own mind much more at rest; I could not judge how far the suspicious conduct of the guides proceeded from real and well-grounded alarm, and how far from a desire to make the best bargain they could by acting on our fears; and I own that the three hours which elapsed from our passing the Arab encampment, till the date-tree groves of the village where we were to lodge arose above the horizon, were not the most comfortable I ever spent. They did pass, however, like many other anxious ones, and it was a relief to hear our guides at length declare that we had passed the dangerous district, and could now proceed in safety. It appeared to be a relief to them as well as to ourselves, for they now seemed as eager to press forward—no doubt to touch their reward—as they had just before been reluctant to move.

What vast plains of rich and cultivable land did we this day traverse and see on every side,—land

that had once been all well cultivated, now utterly waste! What numbers of canals and water-courses did we observe—the traces of former irrigation!—What capacity for agricultural riches and dense population utterly neglected! It was really a melancholy prospect, and it was no small relief to turn the weary eye from scenes of departed industry and wealth to the comfortable abode of existing population where we were to pass the night. We entered Hûp-hûp, one of a cluster of villages upon the Tigris bank, about an hour before sunset; and after some explanation, were very civilly received by the Naib or deputy of the Zabit, Ismael Aga, a Seyed, who provided abundantly for all our wants. The village itself is situated among extensive groves of date-trees —each house has many of them in its court: the scenery reminded me of some parts of Bombay.

During our ride of to-day we put up a great quantity of game—black and grey partridges, in particular; and saw plenty of antelopes at a distance: but the multitudes of desert partridges, which passed us in flocks, was among the most astonishing things of the kind I ever saw. They came in clouds, like locusts; and one, in particular, which was several minutes in passing, formed an arch overhead, the ends of which reached on either hand beyond our sight—there must have been myriads in this flock alone. There are two kinds of this bird common to the plains of central Asia—a larger and a smaller sort, and these were of the latter; but I never before saw them congregated in such multitudes, or, as they apparently were, in a state of migration.

I resolved, if possible, to make up for lost time; and being informed that there was no cause for reasonable apprehension on the road from hence to Baghdad, we secured two Arab guides on foot, and starting from Hûp-hûp at half-past one in the morning, made the best of our way to the great city. Our course led us over ground entirely level, and we passed through several villages before morning, the first beams of which showed us the domes and minarets of Baghdad rising afar off just above the horizon. The plain of Baghdad throughout its extent, appears to be the perfection of fertility; but the application of water is required to render it productive. In former times the magnificent system of irrigation, of which the traces so abundantly exist, rendered it a garden; but now, except the bitter apple, which tempts the eye with its rich orange hue, and the soda-yielding plants which are fit only for the food of camels, nothing was to be seen growing on its vast surface. Although we rode at a good pace, it was a weary while ere the walls of the city rose to sight — and with them once more came anxiety and doubt; for we learned that a tribe of hostile Arabs had encamped in their vicinity, and that the Pashah's troops were stationed opposite the enemy, — that several skirmishes had already taken place, and that plundering parties were out all over the country, so that it was by no means certain we should be permitted to approach the walls unmolested, even though so near in view.

Though this is a state of things too common in

these parts to occasion much surprise to the inhabitants, I own I was startled by the intelligence, which seemed to be confirmed by the discharge of several cannon and a dropping fire of musketry from the very point indicated as the position of the hostile camps: but there being nothing for it except to get as soon under shelter of the walls as possible, we pushed on still faster; and, although met or passed by several small parties of armed Arabs, arrived at the Kirkook gate unmolested, to the no small joy of the whole party. A stoppage, sufficiently provoking, occurred at the gate, whence a caravan was issuing forth, and the Pashah's officers were collecting the duty. The assurance that we were English, and then on our way to the dwelling of the *Balcoos*, or Resident, was sufficient to liberate us from the importunities of the officers; but to extricate ourselves from the throng of mules and yaboos was a less easy matter, and occupied more time than my impatience was pleased with. At length, however, the pass was won; a guide was procured to show us the Residency; and, after a journey through streets and bazaars, that was tedious enough under the circumstances, we reached the goal. I recognized with a thrill of pleasure the Indian Sepoys at the gate—they were as old friends in a strange land—and in five minutes more I was seated at the breakfast-table of Colonel Taylor, with the comforts of a warm welcome and a good meal to greet and revive me. I need not say that the remainder of the day was passed in most interesting conversation with the friends I had now joined, for much was to be

learned and communicated ; but as these communications would not convey the same interest to you as they did to me, I will spare you them at present, and commend you to that sound rest which failed not this night to visit my pillow.

LETTER VIII.

Charms of Rest. — First Impressions of Baghdad—its Walls—Streets—Houses.—River Tigris and its Banks.—Bazaars and Market-places. — Mr. Buckingham's Description of the City.—Mosques and Minarets.—Private Houses.— Domestic Scenes and Manners.—Turkish Women.—Personal Appearance.—Custom of Tattooing the Skin.—Georgian Females—Their Children difficult to rear.—Population of Baghdad.—Costume.—Brilliancy in the Time of Daood Pashah.—Military.—Bazaars.—Cook Shops. Apathy of Turkish Merchants. — Arabs—their Costume. — Loud Speaking.—Noises of Baghdad.

DEAR ——,

THE first two or three days after a journey of considerable length, and on arriving at a strange place, are apt to pass in a sort of feverish and dreaming whirl, which is anything but favourable to the acquisition of correct information or just notions of what surrounds us. Inquiries and replies are rapidly interchanged ; but some knowledge of the localities is necessary before the mind can rightly comprehend the information communicated. Rest, too, — simple rest and quiet—is so delightful, after fighting our way through a difficult country and along a weary road, that we can hardly consent for some time to rouse ourselves to the effort required for seeking after wonders and seeing sights. Every one in such circumstances must,

I think—I hope—have felt this;—felt the delicious sensation of such "idlesse," and experienced the same strong reluctance that I did to break the spell.

My situation, it is true, was one which admitted not of long indulgence. Much was yet to be traversed, and little time could be spared for sight-seeing or lingering over objects of mere curiosity. Yet here was the classic Tigris flowing under our window, enlivened with boats and rafts, and spanned by the well-known bridge of boats that unites its banks. Around us rose the domes and minarets of mosques, and the mausoleums of saints, telling of days long past, when Baghdad was the centre and the might of Islam; Babylon, and Seleucia, and Ctesiphon, were close within our reach; and the whole country around teemed with objects of interest that claimed both attention and exploration. So rousing ourselves to make the best of our short time, we commenced our rounds; and here goes for first impressions.

To those who come from Persia, and especially who have been sickened with such a succession of ruin and desolation as that which had wearied our eyes, the first sight of Baghdad is certainly calculated to convey a favourable impression; nor does it immediately wear off. The walls, in the first place, present a more imposing aspect—constructed as they are of furnace-burned bricks, and strengthened with round towers, pierced for guns, at each angle, instead of the mean-looking, mud-built, crenelated, and almost always ruinous inclosures which surround the cities of Persia. Not

that the wall of Baghdad is perfect—far from it. I speak only of its external appearance;—and the gates also, though in a very dilapidated condition, are certainly superior to those of their neighbours.

On entering the town, the traveller from Persia is moreover gratified by the aspect of the houses, which, like the walls, are all built of fire-burned bricks, and rise to the height of several stories: and though the number of windows they present to the street is far from great; yet the eye is not constantly offended by that abominable succession of mean, low, crumbling, irregular, zigzag masses of mud, divided by dirty dusty clefts, undeserving even of the title of *alleys*, that make up the aggregate of a Persian city.

It is true that the streets, even here, are for the most part mere alleys, and abundantly narrow, unpaved, and, I have no doubt, in wet weather, deep and dirty enough; but in riding along them, particularly in dry weather, one is impressed with the idea that the substantial walls to the right and left must contain good, weather-tight, comfortable domiciles; while the stout, comparatively well-sized, iron-clenched doors with which the entrances are defended, adds to this notion of solidity and security. In Persia, on the contrary, the entrances to most houses, even those of persons of high rank, is more like the hole of some den than of a dwelling for human beings, and the rickety, open-seamed, miserably-fitted valve with which it is closed, does assuredly ill merit the appellation of a *door*.

Nor are the streets of Baghdad by any means

totally unenlivened by apertures for admitting light and air. On the contrary, not only are windows to the streets frequent, but there is a sort of oriel, or projecting window, much in use, which overhangs the street and generally gives light to some sitting-room, in which may be seen seated a few grave Turks, smoking away the time; or, if you be in luck, you may chance to find yourself illuminated by a beam from some bright pair of eyes shining through the half-closed lattice. These sitting apartments are sometimes seen thrown across the street, joining the houses on either side, and affording a pleasing variety to the architecture, particularly when seen, as they often are, half-shaded by the leaves of a date-tree that overhangs them from the court within. There was something in the general *air* of the *tout ensemble*—the style of building—the foreign costume—the mingling of foliage, particularly the palm-leaves, with architecture, when seen through the vista of some of the straighter streets—which called up a confused remembrance of other and better known countries; yet I could scarcely say which—a touch of Madeira—of the West and East Indies, all commingled—something, at all events, more pleasing than the real scene before me. When would anything in a Persian town have called forth such recollections?

Such were the impressions received from what I saw in passing through the town; but the banks of the river exhibited a very different and far more attractive scene. The flow of a noble stream is at all times an interesting object; but when its

banks are occupied by a long range of imposing, if not absolutely handsome buildings, shaded by palm-groves and enlivened by hundreds of boats and the hum of thousands of men, and its stream spanned by a bridge of boats, across which there is a constant transit of men and horses and camels and caravans, and a great traffic of all sorts, the *coup d'œil* formed by such a combination can hardly fail of producing a very animated picture: and such, undoubtedly, is the view of the Tigris from any one of many points upon its banks, from whence you can command the whole reach occupied by the present city.

The first sight of the Tigris was not certainly what I expected: I cannot just say I was disappointed, but I had expected a broader river. I believe, however, it is better as it is, for now the eye commands both banks with ease. With the river *façade* of the town, I was agreeably surprised. We saw few blank walls, as most of the houses have numerous lattices and oriels, or projecting windows, looking out upon the stream. There is a handsome mosque, with its domes and minarets, close to the bridge, itself a pleasing object; and altogether there is an agreeable irregularity, and a respectable loftiness in the line of buildings that overhang the stream upon its left bank, which imparts an interesting variety to the view. The right, or western side is by no means so picturesque in its architecture; but its large groves of date-trees, mingled with buildings, render it also a pleasing object from the more populous side.

With the bazaars of Baghdad, however, I must confess myself disappointed. It is not their want of extent, for they are extensive enough; nor is there a lack of traffic, for they are often sufficiently crowded, and exhibit a far more gay and varied costume than is usually seen in Persian market-places; but there is, in their construction, a poverty of design and meanness of execution, and an appearance of dilapidation, which doubtless is part-attributable to recent misfortunes, but much of ly which is matter of original defect. Some, and amongst them a very extensive triple or quadruple range, the work of the late Daood Pashah, are well built of fire-baked brick and mortar, and shaded from the sun by lofty arcaded roofs of the same materials; but others are very ruinous, and their roofs are formed merely of beams of wood irregularly and temporarily placed, and covered with date-tree branches, or thatch of reeds. The shops themselves are poor, and frequently in disrepair; many are unoccupied; and there is in most places to be seen that air of neglect and reckless squalidity, which so strongly indicates a tendency to general decay.

There are, in various parts of the town, several open spaces where particular sorts of goods are sold, and which have taken their respective appellations therefrom; as the "Thread Market," the "Muslin Market," the "Corn Market," &c. Of these the largest and the gayest is that close to the northwest, or Mousul, gate; but none of them have any pretensions to splendour, or even to cleanliness. The last-mentioned is, in fact, the

great "place" of the city. Horses are here exposed for sale; it is surrounded by coffee-houses, which are constantly filled with an assemblage of all sorts of people, smoking, drinking coffee, &c.: and it is the general place of exhibition, and of execution too, for here criminals are punished with decapitation, hanging, or mutilation; and sometimes passengers are greeted by the sight of a headless trunk or two, exposed for the day, as a warning to evil-doers. The grave Turk, however, insensible to the horror of the spectacle, smokes his pipe quietly, or passes by with indifference, or only a muttered "Allah-il-Ullah!". Even this place of all uses, contains, as I should think, not more than an acre and a half of ground.

Baghdad, both from ancient fame and present importance, deserves a far more accurate and detailed description, than I am prepared to give you: and as I think you might possibly be disappointed were I to leave you quite in the lurch in this matter, I am tempted to borrow a little assistance from other sources, in order to give you a better idea of what this celebrated city is, or rather was very lately, before its late awful visitations. The description given by Buckingham in his "Travels in Mesopotamia," appears to me so good that, as you may not have access to the book, I shall make no scruple of using it where convenient. I wish I could say the same of his views of the place given in the same work; but really they are so perfectly fanciful, that I cannot recommend them as afford-

ing true representations of what they purport to depict.

"The interior of the town," says Mr. Buckingham, "offers fewer objects of interest than one would expect from the celebrity which its name has obtained as an Oriental emporium of wealth and magnificence. A large portion of the ground, included within its walls, is unoccupied by buildings, particularly on the north-eastern side; and even where edifices abound, particularly in the more populous quarters of the city, near the river, a profusion of trees are seen; so that, viewing the whole from the terrace of any of the houses within the walls, it appears to be a city rising from amid a grove of palms, or like what Babylon is supposed to have been—a walled province rather than a single town.

"All the buildings, both public and private, are constructed of furnace-burned bricks of a yellowish red colour, small size, and such rounded corners as proved most of them to have been used repeatedly before, being taken, perhaps, from the ruins of one edifice to construct a second; and from the fallen fragments of that, to compose a third. In the few instances where the bricks are new, they have an appearance of cleanliness and neatness, never presented by the old; though even those are still much inferior to stone. The streets of Baghdad, as in all other Eastern towns, are narrow and unpaved, and their sides present generally two blank walls, windows being rarely seen opening on the

public thoroughfare, while the doors of entrance, leading to the dwellings from thence, are small and mean. These streets are more intricate and winding than in many of the great towns of Turkey, and with the exception of some tolerably regular lines of bazaars, and a few open squares, the interior of Baghdad is a labyrinth of alleys and passages."

"The mosques, which are always the prominent objects in Mahometan cities, are here built in a different style from those I have seen in most other parts of Turkey. The most ancient is thought to be that called "Jameh-ul-Sookh-e-Gazel," or the mosque of the cotton-thread market; but little remains of this beyond a thick heavy minaret, and part of the outer walls."

The minaret has but one gallery; the projection for which, as Mr. Buckingham says, springs from below the centre of the column, going up in a series of pointed arched niches, and dropping ornaments like stalactites, which gradually swell outwards, and terminate in the gallery at about two thirds of the height of the shaft. The termination is round and inelegant, and the whole has a clumsy aspect.

This gallery affords the highest attainable point from whence the city can be viewed; and, in fact, it overlooks most of the terraced roofs and courts for a long space around. I was surprised, in truth, to find that they admitted infidels like ourselves to a height which gave us so unfair an advantage over the "faithful." Our ascent was rendered somewhat difficult by darkness, and the accu-

mulated dung of bats and pigeons, to which latter bird the fret-work of the niches, and the crevices made by time or violence, afford shelter in thousands; that part of the minaret, when viewed from below, appeared actually tessellated with them. This minaret and its ruined mosque are said to be above six hundred years old; but as I am doubtful whether a minute description of the mosques of Baghdad would very much amuse you, I shall content myself for the present with observing that the number of these sacred edifices is believed to exceed, or once to have exceeded, a hundred, though not above twenty or thirty are in any degree deserving of notice; of domes I do not think you see above a dozen of considerable size, and I am certain that the number of minarets are under four-and-twenty. Several, both of domes and minarets, are covered with lackered tiles, chiefly green, white, yellow, and black, disposed in mosaic, to represent flowers, figures, and letters, which, as Mr. Buckingham remarks, have a gay rather than a grand or magnificent effect. On the whole, the mosques and shrines of Baghdad are as inferior to those of the principal Mahomedan cities of India, as its buildings in general are superior to those of the cities of Persia. Of the bazaars, I have already spoken, and quite agree with Mr. Buckingham in regard to their comparative meanness. Of the Khâns and baths, I can as yet say little; but those of the former, which I did see, appeared poor enough.

"Of the private houses of Baghdad," says the author already quoted, "I saw but little excepting

their exterior walls and terraces. It struck me as singular, that throughout the whole of this large city, I had not seen even one pointed arch in the doorway to any private dwelling. They were all round or flat, having a fancy-work of small brick above them; and even in those parts of the old bazaars and ruined mosques in which the pointed arch is seen, its form is nearer to the Gothic than to the common Saracenic shape, which I had also observed to be the case at Mousul; so that Baghdad could not have been the original seat of Saracenic architecture, which probably took its rise much farther in the West.

"The houses consist of ranges of apartments opening into a square, or inner court; and while subterraneous rooms, called *serdâbs,* are occupied during the day, for the sake of shelter from the intense heat, the open terraces are used for the evening meal, and for sleeping on at night. From the terrace of Mr. Rich's residence, which was divided into many compartments, each having its separate passage of ascent and descent, and forming indeed so many unroofed chambers, we could command, at the first opening of morning, just such a view of Baghdad as is given of Madrid in 'Le Diable Boiteux,' showing us all the families of the houses round with their sleeping apartments unroofed, often in sufficiently interesting situations. From this lofty station, at least eight or ten bedrooms in different quarters were exposed around us; where, as the families slept in the open air, domestic scenes were exposed to our view, without our once being per-

ceived or even suspected to be witnesses of them. Among the more wealthy, the husband slept on a raised bedstead, with a mattress and cushions of silk, covered by a thick quilt of cotton, the bed being without curtains or mosquito netting. The wife slept on a similar bed, but always on the ground,—that is, without a bedstead, and at a respectful distance from her husband,—while the children, sometimes to the number of three or four, occupied one mattress, and the slaves or servants each a separate mat on the floor, but all lying down or rising up within sight of each other. Every one rose at an early hour, so that no one continued in bed after the sun was up; and each, on rising, folded up his own bed, his coverlet and pillows, to be taken into the house below, excepting only the children, for whom this office was performed by their mother or a slave.

"None of these persons were as much undressed as Europeans generally are when in bed. The men retained their shirt, drawers, and often their kaftan, a kind of inner cloak. The children and servants lay down with nearly the same quantity of clothes they had worn in the day; and the mothers and their grown daughters wore the full silken trousers of the Turks, with an open gown, and, if rich, their turbans; if poor, an ample red chemise, and a simple covering for the head. In most instances we saw, the wives assisted, with all due respect and humility, to dress and undress their husbands, and to perform all the duties of a valet.

"After dressing, the husband generally performed

his devotions, while the slave was preparing a pipe and coffee; and on his seating himself on his carpet, when these were ready, the wife served him with her own hands, retiring at a proper distance to wait for the cup, and always standing before him, sometimes indeed with the hands crossed, and even kissing his hand on receiving the cup from it, as is done by the lowest attendants of a household. While the husband lounged on his cushions, or sat on his carpet in an attitude of ease and indolence to enjoy his morning pipe, the women of the family generally prayed. In the greater number of instances they did so separately, and exactly after the manner of the men; but on one or two occasions the mistress and some other females, perhaps a sister, or a relative, prayed together, following each other's motions side by side, as is done when a party of men are headed in their devotions by an Imaum. None of the females, whether wife, servant, or slave, omitted this morning duty; but among the children under twelve years of age, I did not observe any instance of their joining in it.

"Notwithstanding the apparent seclusion in which women live here, and indeed through the whole Turkish empire, there is no want of real liberty, which, sometimes, as in other places, is sufficiently abused; nor can it be denied that the facility of clandestine meetings is much greater in Turkish cities between persons of the country, than in any European metropolis. The disguise of a Turkish or Arab female in her walking dress is so complete, that her husband himself could not recognize her

beneath it; and consequently, let a lady go where she will, no suspicion of the truth can attach to any individual.

"Among the women of Baghdad, the Georgians and Circassians are decidedly the handsomest by nature, and the least disfigured by art. The high-born natives of the place are of less fresh and clear complexion, while the middling and inferior orders, having brown skins and nothing agreeable in their countenances except a dark and expressive eye, are sometimes so barbarously *tattooed* as to have the most forbidding appearance. With all ranks and classes the hair is stained with *henna*, and the palms of the hands are so deeply dyed with it as to resemble those of a sailor covered with tar. Those only, who by blood or habits of long intercourse are allied to the Arab race, use the blue stains so common among the Bedooeens of the desert. The passion for this method of adorning the body is carried in some instances as far as among the ancient Britons; for, besides the staining of the lips with that deadly hue, anklets are marked round the legs, with lines extending upwards from the ankle, at equal distances, to the calf of the legs; a wreath of blue flowers is made to encircle each breast, with a chain of the same pattern hanging perpendicularly between them; and among some of the most determined *belles*, a zone, or girdle of the same composition, is made to encircle the smallest part of the waist, imprinted indelibly upon the skin. There are artists in Baghdad whose profession it is to decorate the ladies with wreaths, &c. of the newest fashions."

So far Mr. Buckingham; and as I do not know any better account of the ladies of this quarter, I have given it nearly entire. It is certain that the women of Georgia and Circassia are the best looking and most esteemed here, but they are much more rare than formerly. Turkey can no longer encourage the slave trade of these oppressed and miserable lands: they are now writhing under the grasp of a still more ruthless tyrant, namely, the Autocrat of all the Russias; and depopulation proceeds with quite sufficient rapidity—not, however, rapidly enough to satisfy the usurper; for, when I was at Tabreez, it was understood that an expedition was about to be sent from Teflis against the Abbassians with the professed intention of extirmination.

Nor is the Georgian race likely to be perpetuated here; for it is a singular fact that few of the females of that country can rear a child here. They generally die before they are three years old, and some attribute much of this mortality to the injudicious indulgence of the mothers themselves, who stuff the little creatures with sweetmeats and other improper sorts of food.

The population of Baghdad was estimated by Mr. Buckingham when there, at from fifty to one hundred thousand souls. He considers it as less than that of Aleppo, yet greater than that of Damascus, so that he fixes on eighty thousand as being probably near the mark. Assuredly, however, in the time of Daood Pashah, it experienced a great increase, and previous to the plague of 1830, could not have

been less than one hundred and fifty thousand souls. The greater number of these were Turks and Arabs, but there were also many true Baghdadees; a somewhat peculiar race, having a mixture of Persian and Indian blood infused into the principal stocks. Most of the merchants are of Arab descent, and at that time there was a number of Jews, Armenians, and Christians of the Catholic and Syrian churches. Koords, Persians, and Bedoueens, are to be seen in abundance in the bazaars; but the last do not like to pass the night within the walls; and the greater number of Persians, who for the most part are pilgrims to the shrines of Kerbelah and Meshed-Allee, either repair at once to Kâzemeen, a village and shrine about four miles distant on the western bank of the river, or encamp without the walls on the north side of the city.

Mr. Buckingham describes the costume of Baghdad, as being far less splendid at that time than that of Egypt or Constantinople. Of that I cannot judge; but certainly the show of dress and accoutrements at present is far from brilliant. In the time of Daood Pashah, I have been assured it was otherwise. That chief retained a splendid court and establishment, and his military array was extremely glittering and imposing. His eight hundred Georgians, gorgeously dressed and armed, and mounted on fine Arab steeds, splendidly caparisoned, must of themselves have made a very gallant show; and his officers, taking the tone from their master, vied with each other in the magnificence of the equipment and number of their followers.

At present, nothing of all this exists. The wretched handful of military now here is confined to a few *Haitahs*, or Albanian horsemen, mingled with others of the country, most shabbily dressed and equipped, and a detachment of the Nizâm, or new regular troops, as exquisitely *ir*-regular a corps as imagination can figure, whose semi-Europeanised dress has robbed them of the portly look of Turks without bestowing on them the smartness or business-like appearance of the European soldier. There are but a few hundred of these anomalous heroes, whose slovenly outfit, with the red *fez* (the head-dress worn by all who own the Sultan's authority), reminded me more of the French prisoners of old, with their red nightcaps and rusty coats, than anything else I can recollect. About the Serai, or Pashah's palace, there is no bustle nor show, and the mean and corrupt officials of the wretched being who does duty here as Pashah, follow the example of their master in shabbiness and poverty of attendance as well as in all other respects.

Still, in the bazaars there is something of a glittering stir; for both Turks and Arabs are fond of red in all its shades, and of other gay colours, and their furs and embroidery, and shawled turbans, and flowing garments, with the silver-hilted daggers and pistols at their waists, make up a lively and pleasing picture.

Riding through the bazaars is, however, a service of some danger. Though forming the common thoroughfares, they are so narrow that you are constantly stopped by trains of loaded camels or mules,

the packages on whose backs are apt to break either your head or your knees, according to the height of the passing quadruped; and you have enough to do in steering your course between them and the crowd of ruffian-like Arabs that beset every street and passage. The trains of asses, loaded with wood, reminded me of the lady in the "Arabian Nights' Entertainments," who, by falsely attributing the wound in her cheek to a blow from the pannier of one of these animals, endangered the lives of the whole respectable community of wood-drivers; and sundry rents in my trousers, more than once vindicated the plausibility of the lady's tale. I wish I could say that the cooks' shops, in like manner, recalled the image of that of Simmoustapha and his delicious cream-tarts: but, in fact, the smell of rancid butter, and of the frying fat of sheep's tails, was the very reverse of attractive; nor are the confectioners' shops by any means so tempting as those of Constantinople.

Among the things which strike a stranger, is the imperturbable stillness and apathy, as it seems, with which the Turkish merchant sits on the raised platform at his door, smoking his pipe in the midst of the bustle around him, as if he heard it not, or had nothing of a trader's interest in the sale of his wares. Does a customer approach, he slowly and silently displays the goods required, and serves him if they suit—if not, he smokes on. A Persian would have asked you a dozen times what you wanted; showed you fifty things successively, that you did not want; and jumped from his seat, and sat

down upon it again, as many times, while the grave indifferent Turk is taking his chibouk from his mouth to speak to you. It must be owned, however, that the Jew and Armenian dealers compensate, by their quickness and volubility, for the torpor of the Turks; they are active enough, in all conscience, in ascertaining and supplying the wants of their customers.

Another remarkable feature to a stranger, in the streets and bazaars of Baghdad, is the multitude of Arabs, both Bedoueens and residents in the city, to which I have already alluded. Their dress consists of a coarse shirt, over which the better sort wear a wrapping gown of some sort of silk, or cotton stuff, generally striped; and all throw an *abba* or cloak of peculiar form, wide, armless, but with holes to thrust the arms through, and made of close-woven worsted, striped with broad white and brown perpendicular bars, but sometimes black or white. This is the peculiar national dress—the regular Arab mantle. The head-dress is not less peculiar. It is not, as many believe, a turban, nor anything like it. It consists of a sort of square thick-woven handkerchief of silk, in large bright yellow and red stripes, the woof of the ends being twisted into cords, like a fringe of great length. This being doubled triangularly, is thrown over the head in the fashion of the old highland women, two ends hanging down before the shoulders, while the other two (in one) hang down the back. Around the crown of the head, thus covered, is wound a wisp of brown camel's hair, partially twisted, two

or three times, so that, with their loose cloaks and strange head-dresses, they at first sight rather resemble witch-like women than men. Without a drawing it is impossible to convey to you a full idea of the singular effect of this head-gear, aided as it is by a pair of dark piercing eyes, looking out from among their black elf-locks; for the Arabs do not, like other Mahomedans, shave the head; but plait their long, coarse, coal-black hair (which falls down over their shoulders and back) under the handkerchief. It is, however, a capital head-dress for the desert; neither heat nor cold can penetrate it, especially when they wear under it, as most do, a scull-cap like a Welsh wig, made of camel's hair; for, in cold weather, they wind the ends of the handkerchief about the throat and jaws, and throw it over the face and eyes when the heat of the sun is oppressive, so that it forms an excellent protection in both cases. Nevertheless, these Bedoueens are burned to an almost sooty blackness; and singularly wild figures they make, I assure you, scowering along on their little blooded steeds, their clothes flying wide in the wind, and their long spears shaking over their shoulders. Even in the city one is apt to regard them as dangerous persons to encounter, as they brush along with an air of fierce independence; for the Arab comports himself everywhere as lord of the soil, and, in fact, he is here very nearly, if not absolutely so. Then their shouting and their roaring, as they go along, might lead one to believe they were about to plunder every one they meet; for the Arab never talks except at the top of his

voice; and so deafening is that voice, that strangers are apt to suppose they are quarrelling when, in fact, they are merely conversing or relating some trivial occurrence. This peculiarity has sometimes led to ludicrous mistakes. There was an Indian Nawâb here, who had imbibed a great horror for the cholera, insomuch that he never went without a bottle of laudanum and a box of cholera pills in his pocket; one day, soon after his arrival, being in a coffee-house, or some public place, an Arab, who was present, was either asked or volunteered to sing; but the labour of this musical effort produced such fearful shrieks and horrible contortions, that the good Nawâb, who was ignorant of the language, imagined that the man was seized with cholera, which just then was said to have made its appearance at Baghdad. Up jumped the Nawâb—out came the bottle and pills. "Here, my good fellow," said he, running to the musical Arab; "swallow these pills then and take a gulp of this bottle; never fear, you will do well enough, only take the physic." The astonished singer stared, of course, and repelled the proffered doses, exclaiming "*la, la, la!*" no, no, no! but the Nawâb persisted, and I am not sure, before he was convinced of his error, whether he had not persuaded his unfortunate patient into swallowing his remedies.

But it is not the Arabs alone that habitually make this clamour; it is general in Baghdad, which, I think, of all places I ever was in, is the most remarkable for every imaginable sort of noise, and its inhabitants the most intolerably obstreperous.

The room I now occupy has a balcony over the street, with two windows; so that everything that passes under, is as well heard as if it were going on in the room. Before day I have a concert of cocks and hens from a neighbouring yard; this is followed by the lively beat of the "reveillez" from the Sepoys' quarter, which, in its turn, rouses a host of dogs; these keep up a very industrious running base of barking, till the donkeys begin to bray. By that time the neighbouring Arabs who have been driven into town by the disturbed state of the country beyond its walls, have shaken their ears, and begin to drive out to pasture the flocks of sheep and herds of cattle and camels they have brought in with them for security. Assuredly Arab sheep and cattle have the deafest ears to the voice of the charmer, of any animals on earth, or they are grievously abused by their drivers: for such a routing and roaring as is made to induce the beasts to move along, I never heard in any other place; nor could one imagine that so extraordinary a variety of guttural sounds could be uttered by the lungs of man. Flock after flock, herd after herd, are to be heard approaching from afar; the uproar swells upon the ears, dinning and confounding them till the drums of the said organs are well nigh cracking, and just when it begins to retreat, and you are venting a silent expression of thankfulness for the relief, another burst of vociferation arises in the distance, so that the same torture continues generally for two hours. By that time the rest of the biped inhabitants are astir. The quiet Turk shuffles si-

lently along, nor do the Christians or Jews commit any violent trespass upon the sense of hearing; but there are more Arabs—ay, this street is their great thoroughfare, and here and everywhere they rush along in droves, like the less brutal animals they drive or ride, hallooing to each other and to all they pass, often maintaining a conversation at the top of their tremendous voices, with some equally clear-piped brother, at a quarter of a mile's distance: as for approaching nearer for convenience of communication, they never dream of such a thing; lungs are cheaper than legs, it is clear, at least in Baghdad. Then there is—but I spare you the further detail of town criers, Saints routing out their pealing ejaculations, beggars and fakeers thundering forth their petitions in the name of Allah and the Prophet; and, worse than all, professed singers practising their voices as they pass along. In short, Hatchett's in Piccadilly when all the mails and coaches are under despatch,—Cockspur Street and Charing Cross, when the season is fullest and the cries are loudest,—or Smithfield on a special market-day,—or Billingsgate, or all of these together, must strike, and yield the palm for variety and intensity of noise, to Baghdad, the true legitimate successor of old Babel!

LETTER IX.

Causes of the ruinous State of Baghdad.—Plague appears in the City—its Progress.—The English Resident quits Baghdad —Mr. Groves declines accompanying him.—Progress of the Pestilence.—The water breaks through the Wall and inundates the City—seven thousand Houses fall at once, fifteen thousand Persons buried.—Distress of the Pashah.—Caravans overtaken by the Flood.—Inundation abates, and the Disease also.—Mr. Groves's house attacked by the Disease.—His Wife and Child die.—Instances of sweeping Mortality, and Causes thereof.—Effects of the Pestilence in other Places.—Baghdad after the Plague and Inundation.—Two more Plagues in as many Years.—Mortality at Bussora.

DEAR ——,

IN following Buckingham, I have described Baghdad as it was in the days of Assad Pashah; I have also adverted to its increase in population and brilliancy under Daood; and were I to stop here, you might remain under the impression that such still remained its condition: alas! how lamentably would you be mistaken!—"How are the mighty fallen!"—Baghdad is now, comparatively speaking, a ruin and a desert! and the change has been effected by as signal and remarkable a succession of calamities, as any modern city perhaps has ever experienced. Plague, inundation, and famine, in their worst shapes, destroyed the population and over-

turned the walls and buildings of this great city; and the tyranny of man, worse even than those scourges of the Almighty, has been and is fast sweeping off the remnant left by them.

Towards the end of the career of Daood Pashah, that is, in the year 1830, his enemies prevailed in the councils of the Porte, and his downfall was resolved upon; but so firmly had he established himself in his place, that not all the power of Constantinople would have been able to effect his overthrow, had not a mighty arm interfered to pull him down. Daood had long applied himself to the formation of an efficient army, and had succeeded so well that he might have laughed to scorn all the military array which the Sultan could have sent against him. Thus stood matters when, in the commencement of 1831, the plague which had been desolating Persia, made its appearance in Baghdad. Insulated cases had occurred, it was said, so early as the preceding November, but they were concealed or neglected; and it was not until the month of March 1831, that the fatal truth of the plague being in and increasing in Baghdad, became notorious and undeniable.

On the last day of March, Colonel Taylor shut up his house, in accordance with the painful but necessary custom of Europeans, who find, by experience, that if this precaution be taken in time, they generally escape the malady which appears to be communicable only by contact or close approach *to leeward* of an infected person. On such occasions all articles from *without* are received through

wickets cut in the wall, and are never touched till passed through water. Meat, vegetables, money, all undergo this purifying process, and letters or papers are received by a long pair of iron tongs, and fumigated before being touched by the hand. Well were it for the natives of the country if they could be prevailed upon to submit to the same measures of precaution—the disease would then be robbed of half its terrors, and its victims greatly reduced in numbers; but indolence and indifference, combined with a dim belief in predestination, prevents them from effectual exertions, although the fact, that thousands fly from the city in hopes of escaping the pestilence which had penetrated into their dwellings, proves indisputably that their faith in fatalism is by no means firm or complete.

In some cases this flight was made in time, and the fugitives escaped, though too often only to perish at another period and in another place. In others, they carried the disease along with them, spreading its poison, and dying miserably in the desert. Even all the care observed by Europeans has sometimes been insufficient to preserve them from contagion. The virus is so subtile that the smallest possible contact suffices for communicating it, and the smallest animal serves to convey it. Cats, mice, and rats are, for this reason, dangerous inmates or visiters; and cats in particular, as being more familiar with man, become more dreaded, and consequently are destroyed whenever they are seen by those who have faith in the value of seclusion. An instance of the fatal consequence of contact with

such animal occurred in the house of a native Christian attached to the British Residency, who had the good sense to follow the Resident's example in shutting up his house on a former occasion. A cat belonging to the family was touched by his eldest child, a girl of fourteen or fifteen. The animal had either been abroad itself, or had received the visit of a neighbour, for the contact brought the plague — the child took it and died of it. Poor thing! from the first moment she was aware of her danger and fate. "I have got the plague," she said, "and I shall die;" the fatal spots and swellings soon proved the justice of her apprehensions, and in four days she was dead.

It was probably by some such casual means that the disease was brought into Colonel Taylor's house, although he and all its inmates conceived it to be almost hermetically sealed from its approaches. On the 10th of April, a Sepoy died of it, and four of his servants were attacked. By this time the disease had made such progress, that seven thousand persons had died of it in the eastern half of the city, which contains the residence of the Pashah, the British Mission, and all the principal inhabitants. From the other side, the accounts were not less disastrous, and the distress of the inhabitants was further aggravated by the rise of the waters of the Tigris, which, having burst or overleaped the dams made upon its banks higher up, had inundated the low country to the westward, and even entered the town, where two thousand houses were already said to have been destroyed. Many

who would have fled, were prevented from doing so, not only by this spread of the waters, but by the Arabs, who had now congregated around the city, and who robbed and stripped naked all who came out of it.

Thus pent up, the pestilence had full play, and the people fell beneath it with incredible rapidity; and Colonel Taylor, finding his own house infected, had nothing left but to use the means in his power of flying, while a possibility remained of so doing. His own boats, in which he and his family had come from Bussora, remained always moored beneath the walls of the Residency, and in a state of readiness for immediate service. In these he resolved to embark; and one great advantage was, that being in a manner confined to the precincts of the Residency, and so much raised by the heightened waters, that the deck of the yacht was on a level with the postern-door of the house, its inmates could make their preparations and get on board without being subjected to any foreign intercourse whatever. Matters being thus arranged, Colonel Taylor invited the Reverend Mr. Groves, a missionary, whose name is familiar to you, with his family, to accompany his party to Bussora, where, in a house in the country, sanguine hopes were entertained that they might avoid the contagion.

Mr. Groves, however, on mature deliberation, declined availing himself of Colonel Taylor's offer. The reverend gentleman had undertaken the care of a certain number of young persons, the children of Christian families of Baghdad, and motives of

duty prevented him from taking a step which appeared to him like a desertion of his duty. He resolved to remain at his post; and, putting his trust in that Almighty Power which had sent the dreadful affliction, and who, he well knew, could save as well as destroy, he shut up his house, in which were twelve persons, including an Armenian schoolmaster and his family, and calmly awaited the issue. It is from this gentleman's journal that the best accounts of this dreadful period are to be collected; and from it therefore, so far as the plague and inundation are concerned, I shall take the liberty of quoting occasionally in the following short account of the condition of Baghdad.

Colonel Taylor left Baghdad on the 12th of April. On the previous day the number of deaths was understood to amount to twelve hundred, and on that day it was ascertained that one thousand and forty deaths had actually taken place on the east side of the river alone. Next day, Mr. Groves had the pain of becoming aware that the disease had entered the house of his next-door neighbour, where thirty persons had congregated, as if for the very purpose of supplying it with victims. That same day, the report of deaths varied from one thousand to fifteen hundred, and that exclusive of the multitudes who died beyond the walls. On the succeeding day, the deaths increased to eighteen hundred; and so terrified were the survivors, that they scarcely could be prevailed on to stay and bury their dead. Many prepared for the fate they anticipated, by providing winding-sheets for

themselves and family, before the increased demand should consume the whole supply. Water also became scarce; for every water-carrier when stopped, replied, that he was taking his load to wash the body of some dead person. An Armenian girl told, Mr. Groves, that she had counted fifty bodies being carried for interment within the space of six hundred yards. Not a single effort was made by the inhabitants, who appeared utterly confounded. They sat at home waiting for death, as if stunned by what was passing, and scarcely a soul was to be seen at this time in the streets except the bearers of the dead, or persons carrying grave clothes, and water-carriers bearing water to wash the bodies.

For several days together about this time, that is, from the 16th to the 20th or 21st of April, the mortality, so far as could be known, remained stationary at about two thousand a day; but many singularly distressing cases of individual distress occurred. In the family of one of Mr. Groves's little pupils, consisting of six persons, four were ill with the plague—the father and mother, a son and a daughter, leaving but one son and a daughter untouched. Of the Pashah's regiments of seven hundred men each, some had already lost five hundred; and the report from the neighbourhood was still worse than in town. The water, too, in the swollen river was fast increasing, and the danger of a total inundation became every day more imminent.

On the 21st, the water burst into the cellars of the Residency, and reached to within a foot of the embankments around the city; and Mr. Groves,

in hopes of being able to render assistance, went to the Residency. The scenes he witnessed on the way were most distressing, nor was help to be obtained for the sufferers on any terms. One had a wife, another a mother, in the agonies of death: a third was himself forced to carry water to wash a dead child: for now no regular water-carrier was to be found; or if seen, he was accompanied by some servant, driving him to a place of death. The yard of the mosque was already full of fresh graves, and they were burying in the public roads. "Death," says Mr. Groves, "has now become so familiar, that people seem to bury their nearest relatives with as much indifference as if they were going about some ordinary business!"

Nor were the prospects nearer home less painful and depressing. Opposite the windows of Mr. Groves's house there was a narrow passage leading to eight houses, and from this small spot day after day they saw dead bodies carried out until the number amounted to seventeen. On the 23rd the mother of the Seyed, who was Mr. Groves's landlord, died in her own house, and no other help being to be had, she was there buried by the hands of her two female servants, who themselves soon after died; and no one being aware of their fate, there they lay, their bodies tainting the air, until the house being soon after plundered and the door broken open, the fact became known.

On this same day, a little girl of twelve years old was seen passing by with an infant in her arms; and on being asked whose it was, she said she did not

know — she had found it in the road and heard that its parents were dead. This was a very common effort of charity, especially on the part of the females, and not unfrequently proved fatal to them. An Armenian woman, who had come to beg for some sugar for an infant thus found, mentioned that a neighbour of hers had, in the same manner, rescued two, which she discovered thus abandoned in the street. Both these infants died, and were followed by their charitable protectress. Of all the painful incidents that attended the benevolent expeditions which Mr. Groves occasionally made from home, the sight of the number of infants thus exposed was the most distressing. When parents found themselves infected they would take the future orphans and lay them at the doors of the houses in the neighbourhood, "exposing them," as Mr. Groves says, "to the tender mercies of strangers at a time when every feeling of nature was deadened by personal misery. Many," continues he, "of the hundreds of infants thus exposed were not more than ten days old; and I have seen in my walks to the Residency as many as eight or ten in this condition. Nor was there any help or human hope for them, save that those who laid them there might again return and pick them up when they saw no stranger would do so. All my efforts, and they were earnest and anxious, failed in providing any effectual relief for these little innocents, which my own family were not in a condition to afford, even had I dared to hazard the risk of bringing infection within my doors."

By the 24th almost all the cloth for winding-sheets was consumed; so that the survivors were forced to bury the dead in the clothes they had worn. Water was not to be had at any price, though the river was so close, and the mortality was estimated at thirty thousand souls within the walls — yet still there was no diminution in the number of daily deaths. Not one in twenty of those attacked are thought to have recovered.

On the 25th the fall of a wall in the Residency from the sapping of the water induced Mr. Groves again to visit that place. Not a soul did he meet in the streets, except those who carried dead bodies and persons infected with the pestilence. Bundles of clothes, the reliques of the dead, were thrust out at many doors. The yard of the great mosque was shut up — there was no more room to bury them, and they were digging graves in the way-sides, in the roads themselves, and in any vacant spot. While conversing with the only servant of Colonel Taylor remaining alive in the Residency, information was brought to the man that his aunt, the *eighth* of his near relatives who had been seized by the contagion, had just died like the rest. One of the principal sellers of cotton for burying-clothes (who had taken advantage of the times to raise his price exorbitantly) this day died himself. There was then no more of the stuff in the city. The price of rope, too, had become quadruple. Instead of formal burial, the bodies, even of persons of considerable wealth, were now just laid across the back of a mule or ass, and taken

to a hole, attended, perhaps, by a single servant. Mr. Groves mentions the gesticulations of the few Arab women whom he met in the way as particularly striking — they seemed to demand of Heaven why Franks and Infidels like him, were suffered to live, while so many of the faithful died. The effect upon his mind was peculiarly startling and painful; surrounded as he was by the dead and the dying, the growling of the dogs that were mangling the bodies (scarcely waiting till life was fled to begin their horrid feast), united with the cries of the exposed miserable infants, formed a scene of horror which he avers—and no wonder—can never be erased from his memory.

The mortality, meantime, increased. On the 26th, it was affirmed at the Serai, that the deaths had reached *five thousand in one day!*—there seems no doubt that they exceeded four thousand, and this out of a population which at that time did not exceed fifty or sixty thousand; for at least one-third of the late inhabitants had, first and last, quitted the city. The water, too, had risen frightfully, and the anticipations in case of its breaking into the city were terrible. Dreadful as they were, however, they were more than realised on the two following days. That night a large portion of the wall fell, and the water rushed in full tide into the city. The quarter of the Jews was speedily inundated, and two hundred houses fell at once. A part, also, of the wall of the citadel fell; nor was there much hope that any house or wall which the water had reached, could stand, owing to the very dissolvable nature of

the cement with which the greater part was built. By the following night the whole lower part of the city was under water; and seven thousand houses are said to have fallen at one crash, burying the sick, the dying, and the dead, with those still in health, all in one common grave. It is said, and upon no mean authority, that not less than fifteen thousand persons, sick and well, were overwhelmed on this occasion alone; nor, when the crowded state of the yet habitable part of the city is considered, — the people prevented from flying by the inundation without,—is the calculation at all incredible. The few who escaped from the ruins, brought the shattered reliques of their families to the houses yet remaining in the higher parts of the city, emptied by plague or desertion, and thus furnished fresh food for the pestilence that lurked in the infected habitations which they occupied. "Nothing," says Mr. Groves, "can give a more impressive idea of the intensity of individual misery at this period, than the fact that this fearful event, which at another time would not only have occupied every tongue, but called forth the most active exertions in favour of the sufferers, passed off almost without remark, and without an effort to relieve them."

The difficulty of obtaining provisions had now become extreme. Very respectable persons would now present themselves at the door to beg for some of the commonest necessaries. The number of the dead, too, left in the streets had increased to a frightful degree; nor was there a possibility of removing

them. This extremity of distress was shared to the full by the ruler of the smitten city. The Serai of the Pashah was by this time like the dwellings of most of his subjects—a heap of ruins, where he himself remained in the utmost terror and perplexity. He declared to a servant of Mr. Groves's that he knew not where to sleep in safety. He dreaded every night being buried in the ruins of the remaining portion of his dwelling. He sent to request the Resident's remaining boat that he might fly from the place; but of its crew only one man was to be found alive, and even the Pashah could not procure men to man her. "Fear of him is passed," says Mr. Groves, "and love for him there is none." Even in his own palace he was without power: death had been full as busy there as elsewhere; and that authority which was absolute in times of mere human agency, had shrunk into nothing before the effects of an Almighty mandate. Out of one hundred Georgians that were about him, four only remained alive. All that could be done was to throw the dead out of the windows into the river that they might not shock or infect the living. The stables of the palace, like the palace itself, fell in pieces, and all the Pashah's beautiful horses were running wild about the streets, where they were caught by any one who could, and most of them were sold to the Arabs. "If the Pashah were thus destitute of help," observes Mr. Groves, "what must have been the misery of the great mass who were left to die alone!"

During this frightful mortality around, the home

prospects of Mr. Groves and his family, although they had hitherto been providentially exempted from actual disease, were sufficiently gloomy and distressing. From the little passage opposite they had *seen* twenty-five bodies carried out, and they knew of several persons being ill. In one of the houses which had contained eight inmates, one only remained alive; and in like manner of another household of thirteen, but one solitary individual survived. Nor were these by any means uncommon or singular cases: of eighteen servants and sepoys left by Colonel Taylor, in charge of the Residency, by the end of the month only *four* remained, and of these two were affected and afterwards died. There were five teachers of Arabic and Armenian, connected with Mr. Groves's establishment, *and every one of these died.* Nor, with all this continued mortality did the virulence of the disease abate, nor the number of daily deaths decrease. The remaining population, crowded into smaller and smaller compass by the increasing inundation, presented, as it were, a more sure and deadly aim to the shafts of the pestilence. The influx of new inhabitants into infected houses supplied fresh objects, and their dead remained, poisoning the air, in all the court-yards and areas, and literally encumbered the streets.

Nor was this fearful destruction of human life confined to the city. A large caravan for Damascus had left Baghdad at the commencement of the mortality; but it carried the deadly contagion along with it, and met, moreover, with an enemy scarcely less destructive, in the inundation. They gained a com-

paratively elevated spot where they remained pent up for three weeks, the water constantly gaining on them and their numbers daily thinning, the *kafilah-bashee* (or leader of the caravan) being among the number who died. Many tried to return and take their chance at home; but boats were rarely to be had, and the few to be procured were held at so high a price that few could avail themselves of them.

In the same manner a caravan of two thousand persons, who left Baghdad for Hamadân, in Persia, carried the pestilence along with them, and lost more than half their number on the road. At each resting-place, from sixty to seventy carcasses were left upon the ground, and numbers died during the march upon their horses and mules, or were knocked off them when taken ill, and left to die by the road-side, while their effects were plundered by the survivors.

Worse even than theirs was the situation of thousands who attempted too late to fly, and were caught by the inundation. Retreating to the highest ground they could find, they remained watching the water as it rose, till it got half a yard high in the very tents. They had neither food nor the means of making a fire. Neither sick nor well could lie down, and worse than all, they had no means of burying their dead, who rapidly increased among them. Some, half-frantic with despair, attempted to return that they might die at home; but the waters left no way, and boats were not procurable at any price. To aggravate the miseries of these

fugitives, those who did escape the waters were almost certain to fall into the hands of the plundering Arabs, who stripped all they caught, women and men indiscriminately.

During all this accumulation of human misery nothing was more remarkable than the death-like stillness which reigned throughout the city. The Moollahs ceased to call to prayer—the mourners to lament for the dead. "It was so striking," says Mr. Groves, "that a sickness came over the heart when one thought of the cause."

The first glimpse of relief in this complication of suffering, was the subsiding of the waters, which occurred about the beginning of May. Soon afterwards a little rice was brought from the other side of the river. The monopolists of fire-wood, who had made their harvest of the necessities of the poor inhabitants, had by this time themselves fallen victims to the pestilence, so that fuel was to be had for the taking; and wretches who for a long while had not tasted wholesome food, were enabled to cook a decent meal. Soon afterwards, namely, on the 4th of May, some prospect appeared of mitigation in the plague itself. The previous days had been beautifully fine and clear, and the increasing heat gave promise of a check to its virulence. On that day, the number of new cases, as well as that of deaths, decreased; while the list of recoveries augmented. "Our eyes," says Mr. Groves, "were gladdened by the sight of three or four water-carriers, the first we had seen these ten days;' and many more people have been seen passing and

repassing; and this night, for the first time these three weeks, I have heard the Moollahs call to prayers."

From this time the accounts of the city gradually improved; but, unhappily, on the 7th the disease, which hitherto had spared the house of Mr. Groves, made its appearance there, and, as is well known, that excellent man and devoted Christian had to endure the heavy affliction of the loss of his wife and child.* Only two other persons were there attacked, and these died also — one of them was the schoolmaster, who had already lost *forty* relatives out of forty-four.

It would be endless to relate the instances of sweeping mortality that marked the course of the pestilence. Hundreds of families were carried wholly off; and of others of twenty to thirty persons, only one or two survived. An Armenian told Mr. Groves, that in his quarter, out of one hundred and thirty houses, only twenty-seven of the inhabitants were left alive. The son of Mr. Groves's Moollah declared, that in the quarter where he resided not one remained — *all* were dead; Seyed Ibrahim, the only surviving servant of Colonel Taylor, remained alone out of a family of fourteen; and as a single instance of the mortality in other quarters

* Since this was written, the Journal of Mr. Groves' has been published, and to that most interesting work we beg to refer those who desire to see the simplest and most touching picture possible of Christian fortitude, submission, and piety; and to learn what the high Christian motives of zeal for the Most High and love to his brethren will induce the true follower of Christ to undergo.

of the Pashalic, I may mention, that scarcely an individual was left in the town of Hillah, which before the pestilence possessed a population of ten thousand souls. From all I have been able to collect, as well as from the opinion of Mr. Groves, it appears but too probable, that of the population of Baghdad, not less than two-thirds were carried off by this awful plague, and that the number of dead fell little short of, if it did not exceed, one hundred thousand persons. Assuredly the mortality was greatly increased by the unfortunate coincidence of the inundation, first in the country, which prevented flight and hemmed the great mass of the population within the walls, and afterwards by the entrance of the waters into the town itself, whereby not only were thousands drowned or buried in the ruins of houses, but the remainder became huddled up together into greatly diminished space upon the dry spots, and forced into infected houses in twenties and thirties, surrounded by corruption, and without clothes or provisions, or the means of making a fire. The multitude of unburied dead, too, added greatly to the effects of the pestilence, by tainting the air and rendering it still more noxious.

Yet even in the absence of such contingent causes, such a pestilence as this must have an effect upon an Eastern town, which, in a European city, in our days at least, it could not exercise under the operation of a regular police. The benefit of shutting up and insulating houses from contagion has been proved beyond dispute. Few of the Europeans in Constantinople, or elsewhere, who

adopt this precaution suffer; and were it possible to persuade the natives to adopt similar measures, assuredly the fatality, and probably the duration also, of the disease would be greatly diminished.

I have spoken of the plague of Baghdad in particular, because its effects have been pressed more home upon my observation than that in other places; but there is scarcely a city of Persia of which nearly the same tale, with the exception of what refers to the inundation, might not be told, and where misery in the same ratio was not experienced. Kermanshah, Hamadân, the whole of Koordistan, lost even in a greater proportion. So did Mazunderan and Asterabad. The population of the whole province of Gheelan was reduced to one-fifth—its own people say to *one-tenth.* The city of Resht was utterly depopulated; so were the towns of Lahajan, Fomen, Teregorâm, &c. Conceive this sweep of human life!—this awful mass of human suffering, chiefly attributable to ignorance and mal-administration! and think of the blessings of civilisation—that by a well-organised system of government, and enforcing the measures dictated by sense and experience, the weight of this fearful visitation might, by God's blessing, be diminished, if not totally averted. Would to Heaven that even this were the full extent of calamity entailed upon our brethren of the East by tyranny and mal-administration!

As for Baghdad, the plague at length fled before the increasing heat of summer; by the 26th of May cases had ceased to appear. Mr. Groves

opened his house soon after, and the few remaining inhabitants issued forth to gaze upon the wreck of their city. Melancholy enough was the scene: of all the buildings of Baghdad there remained standing but a small knot upon the banks of the river where the ground was highest, with a mosque or two, the walls and foundations of which had been more securely built than those of the others; and even of those that did remain scarce one had escaped damage. Even after the waters had subsided, houses continued to fall from the effect produced upon the materials and from the sinking of the ground. Beyond this cluster stretched on all sides a vacant space up to the very walls, marked with vestiges of broken walls and the ruins of more than two-thirds of the city; and here and there lay a great lake, left by the receding waters in the lower parts of the ground. Of the long lines of bazaars, many had shared the general wreck, and long it was before those that remained began to fill, and shops to re-open in any numbers. Most of the merchants, and almost all the artificers were dead. Even now, if you require some article of manufacture, for which the place was formerly celebrated, the answer is, "Ah! you can't get that now, for all those who made it are dead of the plague." Whole trades were swept away; and it was some time before the common necessaries of life—food and clothing, were to be had for the surviving population.

Then came the foul fiend Famine, who carried off a portion of those whom the pestilence had left,

but on which we need not dwell. The ruin of the surrounding villages, and effects of war and rapacity in driving away the inhabitants of the vicinity to seek shelter in the town, by degrees reanimated the skeleton of Baghdad with a population, small indeed compared with what it had been, but sufficient, with occasional supplies, to afford objects within the three succeeding years for two more attacks of the plague, and the loss of five thousand and seven thousand souls thereby. The last of these, which only terminated in May last, was introduced into the city entirely by the avarice of its present ruler, who, rather than forbid all intercourse with Kermanshah, which was at that time infected, and thus lose the tribute he exacts from the Persian pilgrims, although warned by the English Resident of the consequences, exposed the city to a visitation which might have rivalled that of 1831. Whether the nature of the malady was in itself less virulent, or that there was a deficiency of suitable *pabulum*, as soils exhausted by one heavy crop seldom yield a succeeding one of great abundance, the mortality was far less in proportion than in the first case. One cause of this fortunate difference was undoubtedly, the freedom of exit which the people enjoyed, from the first appearance of the malady. No opposition was made either by man or by water to their quitting the city, and they took full advantage of the liberty; whole districts moving off, bag and baggage, on its first breaking out. The Jews, in particular, went off in a body, and all who did so were providentially

preserved. On the first occasion, the Pashah interfered to prevent the people from moving, in hope of checking the panic with which all classes were seized on its first appearance in the city; and subsequently the inundation effectually detained them. A like attempt had been made at Bussora. The city gates were closed, and the consequences were most disastrous; for fear and consternation exacerbated the effect of pestilence on the pent-up community, and the mortality exceeded in proportion that of Baghdad. Among the victims was the mistaken governor himself, whose indiscretion thus brought its own punishment.

LETTER X.

Political Consequences of the Plague.—Displeasure of the Porte at the Pashah.—Capidjees and Firmauns.—Dânish Effendi is murdered by the Pashah's Orders.—The Pashah's Alarm.—Allee appointed Pashah of Baghdad.—The City besieged.—The Pashah delivers himself up.—The City treacherously given up.—Daood sent to Constantinople.—Measures pursued by Allee.—Murder of the Georgians—and of Saleh Beg.—Character of Allee Pashah's Government.

THE political consequences of the pestilence were scarcely less important, and it may be said fatal, to the Pashalic of Baghdad, than its physical effects on the population. I have already observed that Daood Pashah had fallen under the displeasure of the Porte. The dangerous spirit of independence and self-aggrandisement displayed by him, had long since awakened the jealousy of the Sultan, and led him to resolve upon his doom on the first fitting opportunity; but the immediate offence which roused its indignation at this particular time, was no less than the murder of an officer sent by it on a mission to the Pashah. It is true that the object of this mission was his ruin—probably his death, but the act was not the less a murder, and treason to the Sultan his master; for in Turkey, whether his Highness is pleased to send a dress of honour, or a bowstring, it is the

etiquette to receive the messenger with equal respect, and a point of duty to bow the head with equal readiness to either.

This, however, is a perfection of obedience which can only subsist while the power of the superior is paramount, and must cease when that power declines; and such being too much the case with Sultans in these degenerate days, it has become rather the fashion to neglect his Highness's least agreeable commands, and, however respectful the outward mode of reception, to treat them with real contempt. Still appearances are kept up; for there is still throughout the empire a lingering sentiment of veneration for the Sultan's name and authority, when brought prominently forward, which scarcely any chief or Pashah, however powerful, would care to outrage. Thus, when it is known that a *capidjee* or messenger is on the road, provision is made for his reception according to the nature of his commission, which is generally intimated to its object, long before his appearance, by some friend in his pay at court. If that be favourable, the messenger's reception is honourable and cordial; if otherwise, measures are usually taken to retard his arrival, until an opportunity occurs for putting him out of the way—an arrangement generally managed so as to have the appearance of accident; a matter not very difficult in a country teeming with banditti and predatory tribes.

The Capidjees themselves, well aware of the danger of their missions, make their own preparations, and a regular display of tactics on either

side is the consequence; the Pashah endeavouring to shun the encounter, whilst the Capidjee makes every effort to reach the presence; for should he once do so, respect for the Sultan's firmaun, that lingering awe I have just alluded to, is still so strong, that if the Capidjee could produce his credentials to the Pashah, surrounded even by his guards, these guards themselves would assist his executioner: but the attempt is pregnant with danger, for failure is almost certain destruction to the Capidjee, who therefore usually provides himself with two sets of firmauns. If he finds the Pashah too powerful for attack, and his own danger therefore correspondingly great, he produces an order for investiture, to serve as a blind until a favourable opportunity of executing the true will of his master may occur.

Daood Pashah had enjoyed the Vizierut for seventeen years, and had employed that time industriously in consolidating his power. He had an army of full thirty thousand horse and foot, from five to six thousand of whom were tolerably well disciplined, and supported by a very efficient artillery. His income from the Pashalic was known to be very large; yet, during all this time, he had remitted little or nothing to the Sultan's treasury: thus the government of Constantinople very naturally conceived that Daood was following the steps of Mahomed Allee Pashah of Egypt, and meant to render himself independent; it therefore, as I have said above, came to the resolution of deposing him, and despatched a messenger, by name

Dânish Effendi, to endeavour to effect that object, while the intrigues of Allee, then Pashah of Aleppo, succeeded in procuring for himself a nomination to the expected vacancy.

Whatever may have been the suspicions or secret precautions of Daood, it does not appear that he was quite prepared for the blow, at the time it came. Dânish Effendi succeeded in reaching Baghdad, and the communications he made to the Pashah were calculated to mislead him as to the true nature of his instructions: but the Capidjee, conscious of the danger of his position, and, like all traitors, mistrustful of others, declined taking up his quarters in the Serai, where he felt he should be more in the Pashah's power, and was accordingly accommodated in the house of an officer high in the Pashah's confidence, named Mahomed Effendi, better known by the designation of *Mussruff*.

In the mean time, he looked around him for instruments to assist him in the discharge of his dangerous commission; and he fixed upon another officer, also high in the Pashah's favour, his *Meer Achôr*, or master of the horse—a man of very considerable talent; and to him he communicated the Sultan's order, offering, at the same time, to confer the investiture of the Pashalic on himself, provided he should assist in securing the person of his master. But the Meer Achôr, though a man of abilities, had not nerve enough for the enterprise thus proposed to him. Let us hope, too, that an honest regard for an indulgent master had its share in determin-

ing him in the course to be pursued. He communicated the fact to the Mussruff; and both together, going to the Pashah, informed *him* of the true nature of the Capidjee's errand.

The Pashah, whose moral courage appears not to have equalled his abilities, was confounded with the intelligence, and appeared unable to decide on what course he should pursue. But the juncture was too momentous to be trifled with; "Either *you* and *we* must go, or that Capidjee," said his two advisers. "If the nature of his errand is but suspected, you are lost—now, and now only is your time." The Pashah, utterly perplexed, and unable of himself to resolve on any course of action, was persuaded to sanction, if not to order the measure which his Mussruff and Meer Achôr suggested. These two officers immediately left the presence; and, taking with them a gigantic fellow of a *chiaoosh*, repaired to the quarters of the Capidjee. That personage, who had retired to rest, was naturally alarmed at the unceremonious manner in which he was roused from his sleep, and in a voice sufficiently expressive of his alarm, demanded what they wanted? adding, that he trusted their untimely visit portended nothing of harm. "That," observed the Mussruff, "you will soon discover; and the airs which you thought fit to assume towards me yesterday, shall be paid off to you to-night." The poor wretch, thoroughly terrified, had recourse, it is said, to the most abject entreaties; but the Musruff called in the huge *chiaoosh*, who, quietly unwinding the

shawl from his waist, threw a twist round the Capidjee's neck, and speedily put an end to his prayers and his life together.

That the perpetrators of this murder felt far from easy as to its consequences is clear enough from the fact, that to quiet suspicion or popular clamour, an individual, intended to personate the Capidjee and dressed in his clothes, was paraded once or twice through the streets; but the rumour of his death still gained credit abroad, and came to the ears of the Resident, Colonel Taylor, who taxed the Pashah with the crime, and represented in strong colours its probable consequences. At first the Pashah equivocated, but the distant muttering of the storm which was gathering at Constantinople, soon brought his Highness not only to confession, but to an earnest solicitation for advice and assistance. Political considerations, as well as a conviction that the Pashah had rather been forced or surprised into the commission of a crime so common in Eastern courts, than its original contriver, induced the Resident to represent his case favourably at Constantinople; and there is little doubt that the affair, with some concessions on the part of the Pashah, would have terminated favourably for him,—in which case an influence most salutary for the Pashalic would have been acquired over its ruler by the Resident—when the occurrence of the misfortune just described, effected as complete a political as physical alteration in the state of affairs, and produced a total revolution in the destinies of the Pashalic, as well as a change of rulers.

By the plague the military power of Daood Pashah was utterly annihilated; some idea of the complete destruction of his army may be formed from the fact, that out of the corps of one thousand men disciplined on the English model, and at one time under the command of Colonel Taylor, one man only was found surviving. The Pashah was actually left alone in a house to which he had retired when his palace fell, and from whence, as you will see hereafter, he was taken by one Saleh Beg, a man connected by blood with some of the former Pashahs, and who entertained, at the time, a notion of becoming Pashah himself.

Scarcely had the disease abated, when the partizans of Allee, Pashah of Aleppo, who had previously obtained the investiture from the Porte, and secured, as he believed, the assistance of Cossim Aga, Pashah of Mosul — Suffook, Sheikh of the Jerboah Arabs — and Solymaun Gunnum, an adventurer of some abilities, who had gathered together a rabble of followers — advanced towards Baghdad with the avowed purpose of taking possession of the Pashalic for Allee: but the inhabitants were not, it appears, disposed to receive him; and the allies sat down before the town, which they attempted to win, partly by fighting, partly by negotiation, and partly, as it turned out, by treachery. It appears, too, that some at least of these allies were playing a double part, intriguing with Daood and probably with Saleh Beg, while affecting to be devoted to Allee. With these mingled views, the three persons named, entered the town, Cossim

Pashah professing himself to be the *Kiayah* (or minister) of Allee: but the people rose upon them, and Suffook and Solymuan Gunnum were forced to make their escape, the former from a house upon the river which he swam. Others were seized, and Cossim Pashah, when off his guard, was pitched into a well by Ahmed Aga, the Toffunchee Bashee (commander of the musketeers) of Daood.

These violent measures confirmed Suffook and Solymaun Gunnum as friends of Allee. They besieged the town for three months, and the cannon of the new Pashah, who by that time had reached the camp, fired into it in all directions. At length the patience of the people got exhausted, and a merchant, by name Hajee Khaleel, having communicated with Allee, let his forces, one night, into town by the southern gate.

During these proceedings the unfortunate Daood, suffering from the effects of plague which he had caught, but miraculously recovered from, and the wounds consequent on which were still open—abandoned by all that remained of his people, even his women, except two of his wives, who adhered to him to the last,—lay concealed in the house of a Baghdadee, known by the nick-name of Kara-Biber, to which, as before observed, he had fled when his palace fell. Previous to that time he had subsisted chiefly through the services of one Seyed Hindee, once a boatman on the river, but of late a sort of useful hanger-on about the Residency. This man used, once a day, to bring his Highness a mess of pillaw, for which he generally

received a piece of money; and thus was the former master of thirty thousand troops sustained in his adversity and abandonment by a poor boatman—he now owed life and support, under pain and sickness, to a humble shopkeeper.

Daood's place of concealment, however, becoming known to Saleh Beg, who has been mentioned as aspiring to the dignity of the Vizierut himself, that person sent people to bring the fallen Pashah into his presence. The master of the house, and the women, alarmed for the consequences, proposed that he should escape by a door that opened into a different street, and offered him their assistance for that purpose. But life, embittered as it was by personal suffering, the sense of his mighty losses, and the necessity of constant concealment, had become too valueless to the ill-fated Daood, to be worth a further struggle. "No," said he, "the time for resistance or for flight is past; I will go wherever, or to whatever fate I am summoned." He was set upon a horse (he could not walk), and taken to the house of Saleh Beg, which is that now occupied by the Resident, and in which I am now a guest. He was received with respect, but immediately made acquainted by his host, or rather captor, with his purposed attempt upon the Pashalic, which he was called upon to aid. Some notion of the powers of Daood's mind and faculties of persuasion may be formed from the fact, that this conference, which commenced in so threatening a form for the ex-Pashah's interest, terminated in an arrangement, by which Saleh Beg consented to

his restoration to the Vizierut, and to act himself as his Kiayah or minister.

But these arrangements were all broken up by the treachery of Hajee Khaleel. Allee was now master of the city; his troops occupied it, but he did not choose as yet to trust his own person in it; and immediately sending for Daood Pashah, whom he received with all possible courtesy, told him that his life was safe; but that he must proceed to Constantinople, where also he would find his person secure: nay, he informed the fallen Pashah that he was at liberty to take what part of his property he pleased, and to see any of his family who remained alive. There is no doubt that this forbearance towards his late enemy was in conformity with orders from Constantinople; but let us not deny to Allee the merit which is his due. He might have fulfilled these commands with less of courtesy — he might, even without committing himself, have rendered them ineffective, save in so far as life was concerned; but he forbore, and Daood no doubt carried off a considerable property, which Allee, by pursuing another course, might have secured to himself. It was, however, comparatively small — perhaps a politic sacrifice. His game at the time was certainly to conciliate— subsequent confiscations amply indemnified him.

Allee, thus fixed upon the musnud, assumed, as I have said, the tone of conciliation; but his first object was to remove all acknowledged partizans of the late Pashah; and to effect this, he unscrupulously resorted to the usual Oriental means of

treachery and murder, so seldom varied in their form of application, and yet, spite of all experience and the jealousy created by their use, so constantly successful. Of the surviving Georgians who formed the body guard, or who had been officers of Daood Pashah, several, anticipating the storm which afterwards burst upon their comrades, had fled the city; but there still remained some eighteen or twenty, in which number was included Saleh Beg, the late aspirant to the Pashalic. These were summoned together one day on pretext of hearing read the firmaun of their pardon, said to have lately arrived from Constantinople; and almost all, except Saleh Beg, who was either unwell or suspicious, and who therefore kept away, attended at the Pashah's divan. They were received with perfect courtesy, partook of coffee and pipes, and the firmaun was just about to be read, when the Pashah was called away to breakfast. This was the signal for slaughter. One Allee Aga, who had charge of the execution, and a fitter operative could not have been pitched upon, now rose and called upon a party of Arnaouts who had been posted ready for the work. These, however, unwilling, or appalled by the nature of the service, remained inactive and irresolute. "What is the matter?" demanded Allee Aga,—"why do you hesitate? Strike!—it is them or you;" and he himself, drawing his sword, struck the Georgian who sat next him. The devoted men, too late alarmed by the order and the act, were rising and drawing their swords. when Allee Aga threw himself on the

man he had wounded before the latter could draw his weapon, and the Arnaouts at the same moment fired their pieces, and fell upon those who remained unwounded by the discharge. The struggle was short: all the Georgians were put to death, some where they sat, others in flying, and after making a formidable resistance; and thus did Allee Pashah rid himself of the last of Daood's Gholaums.

It may appear almost incredible that men in their situation should not have forseen some such attempt, and one and all sought for safety in flight: but, in the first place, it must be recollected that flight from the capital of a distant and hostile country has its dangers; and, secondly, it appears that a more than ordinary share of pains was taken on this occasion to blind the victims. To judge of the degree of treachery and deceit made use of, it may be mentioned that the first person struck down in this scene of blood was a man who had fled from the service of Daood to that of Allee, at Aleppo, and who had accompanied him from thence as his Kiayah, or minister, in which capacity he was sitting in the Pashah's divan when the murder took place—such is Ottoman faith, and the reward of service in Turkey!

Nor did Saleh Beg escape long. He, in like manner, was blinded by a shower of favours, and walked on in a dream of delusive security, till one day, when passing from the office-chamber of the Kiayah to that of the Pashah, into whose presence he had been summoned, he was suddenly seized in a narrow passage, and drawn aside and strangled.

It would be no pleasant task to describe in detail the tissue of treachery, crime, and rapacity that succeeded these events, nor do I pretend to the honour of being Allee Pashah's historian. So soon as prudence permitted, all the property of those in any manner connected with the late Pashah was confiscated, and seizures go on to the present day. These are events too customary upon a change of governors to attract much attention, except from the parties concerned. But this is not the worst: heavy duties were imposed on commerce; the peasantry were abandoned to the extortions of the Pashah's servants; and so atrociously bad has been the general character and effects of his administration, that the country has become almost a desert, overrun by the Arab tribes, who swarm up to the very gates of the city; and his revenues, as far as they depend upon agriculture, have been reduced comparatively to nothing, while terror and detestation of his person and his government pervade all ranks of the people, with the exception of his own immediate creatures.

LETTER XI.

Appearance of the City within and without the Walls.—Politics of Allee Pashah.—The Jerboah Arabs—they invest the City—Retreat.—The Aneiza Arabs called in—dismissed unceremoniously by the Pashah—they refuse to retire—and invest the City.—Engagement between the Pashah's Troops aided by their Arab Allies and the Aneiza—the former defeated, and the Jerboah Sheikh slain.—All the neighbouring Population driven within the Walls.—White Asses and black Slaves.—Female Apartments and Costumes.—Jewels.—Occupations.—Visits.—Voices.—General Conduct and Character.

UNDER the circumstances related in my last letter, you cannot suppose that Baghdad wore much appearance of prosperity when I entered it. The first ride through the city betrayed its wretched condition, and brought into view the deep traces of that flood of misfortune which had so lately passed over it. Immediately beyond the comparatively small knot of buildings left standing by the inundation, lay the wide waste of ruins it had left, with here and there a new house starting up like a ghost from amidst the relics of a buried population. Large spaces of ground had sunk, strangely enough, under the pressure of the water, forming deep hollows among the gardens, which fill up a considerable space in the southern part

of the city. I should think that nearly two-thirds of the whole area on the eastern side of the river was thus divested of habitable buildings; and even those which remain exhibit the effects of the water on their foundations in many ominous cracks; while the façade to the river, though looking well and imposingly at a distance, is really in a very shattered condition. The palace of Daood Pashah, which occupied a very extensive site, stretching to the river bank, is utterly ruined; and the Pasha, who lives in a house that had been occupied by one of the late Pashah's sons, has lately begun to rebuild the wall, in order, as I understand, to convert it into a barrack for his troops.

On the other side the river the scene is not more enlivening. That portion, which is now principally occupied by Arabs, but which formerly contained the houses of many opulent Turks, is still more ruinous than this upon the eastern side. There you ride through little else than fallen and falling walls, and the débris of what once was a dense mass of dwellings. The wall of the town on both sides of the river is shattered and tottering, and the great gaps by which the water entered are still in the same condition as the inundation left them in.

Without the walls, the prospect is peculiarly cheerless — it is, in fact, a type of the present condition of the Pashalic. Excepting the banks of the river, which to the extent of about three miles each way are fringed with date-tree groves, a naked plain, bounded only by the horizon,

stretches on all sides to the very gates. It is true that at this period this desert is enlivened by tents and camps of Arabs, by flocks of sheep and cattle, herds of camels, and a considerable succession of comers and goers on foot or on horseback; but even this temporary show of life and bustle is owing to the particular and most unwelcome pressure of external circumstances.

I mentioned that on my arrival near the town I had learned that a tribe of hostile Arabs was encamped in the neighbourhood; I did not, however, know how near we had been to witnessing an Arab battle. It appears that the politics of Allee Pashah, which like that of his predecessors and many sovereigns of the East as well as West, are grounded on the Jesuitical maxim of "*Divide et impera*,"—always a dangerous one—had broken down in the present case, and left him sorely in the lurch. It had been the practice of his predecessors, few of whom were powerful enough to control collectively the numerous tribes of Arabs by whom they were surrounded, to foment discord between them, and when threatened or pressed by one tribe to bring up another to oppose them. This, I say, is dangerous policy, unless when backed by a force sufficient at a pinch to render the politician independent of untoward *contretems*. If such be not at his command, the chances are that, as in the case of Allee Pashah, incroachments are made by each party, who by turns play the part of friend and foe, until from servants and allies they become masters.

The tribe of Jerbah or Jerboah (from the animal so named) had originally been brought into the upper part of the Pashalic in order to assist the late Pashah in turning out some other race of robbers; and the service which their chief, Suffook, had rendered to Allee, entitled him, in his own opinion, to some further indulgence or concession from that Pashah. But Allee thought differently on this point from his late coadjutor; he rejected Suffook's demands and threatened him with his high displeasure; on which the Arab first retired to the upper part of Mesopotamia, where he stopped all intercourse upon the road, plundered caravans and stripped travellers, and next, by way of giving his late master a specimen of his power, he came down with his whole tribe and invested Baghdad itself.

For three months was the city held in blockade, and the neighbouring villages plundered at will by this hardy robber, without the smallest opposition being made on the part of the Pashah—indeed he had no means of making any. At the end of that time, whether from failure of forage and increasing scarcity of plunder, or some other cause, the Arabs suddenly broke up their camp and disappeared; and Baghdad, one fine morning, found itself free of its troublesome visiters. Suffook retired to his haunts in Upper Mesopotamia; but promised a repetition of his visit in the following year—a threat so alarming to the Pashah, that he sent to call in the assistance of the *Aneiza*, another very powerful tribe, to whom he promised the lands of the Jerboah, upon condition of turning them out of them.

Not trusting to this means alone, the Pashah also contrived to create a division among the Jerboah themselves; and, using the power arrogated by his predecessors, however nominal in his own case, of creating whomsoever he chose as *Sheikhs*, or chiefs of the Arab tribes, he nominated a young man, rejoicing in the euphonious name of *Schlaush*, to the dignity of Sheikh of the Jerboah. Only a small number of the tribe, however, paid attention to this nomination, while the greater and most respectable portion adhered to their old chief Suffook. In the mean time the Aneiza, whose mouths watered at the prospect of revelling in the rich pastures of the Jerboah, came as required, with no less than thirty-five thousand fighting men, making sure of annihilating their opponents. But by this time the alarms of the Pashah and his protégé Schlaush were quieted by the retreat of Suffook, from some cause or other, to a still safer distance; and his Highness sent to inform his new allies that their services were not now required. You will not wonder that the Aneiza, whose hopes were high, and who had come from distant regions, where little fat was to be found on the bones of the land, should take this cavalier mode of treatment in anything but good part. They flatly refused to leave the place, until the Pashah should have complied with *his* part of the agreement, as they had performed theirs; and they took up a position across the narrowest part of the jezirah in the vicinity of the city, calculated to lend emphasis to their determination.

The Pashah, again alarmed, now called upon his

protégé Schlaush, to come and aid in defending the city and send the Aneiza about their business; while on his part he mustered his own troops, consisting of some hundreds of Albanian horse, and of the Nizâm, or regular infantry, which, with his artillery, he sent out to show front to the Aneiza. Schlaush obeyed the summons, and brought his division of the tribe to the vicinity of the city, and with characteristic Arab feeling, even Suffook, his rival Sheikh, sent a detachment of two thousand men to his assistance on the occasion. "You and I are enemies," was his message to Schlaush, "and we may settle our quarrel at a convenient season; but at present the honour of the tribe is concerned, and I will not see it endangered without yielding my assistance to preserve it." The aid, however, was sent in vain, for the Aneiza were too powerful to be successfully attacked by the Jerboah, had even the whole tribe been mustered for the purpose. Some skirmishing at first took place with small effect on either side, but on the very day preceding that on which I reached the city, one of these brushes had brought on a general engagement—such at least as goes by that term among Arabs. In this the Pashah and his allies were entirely defeated, and even their cannon remained for a while in the hands of the Aneiza;—but the brunt of the action and of the loss fell on the Jerboah, whose new chief, Schlaush, was cut to pieces, and who lost more men, it is said, than have fallen in an Arab battle for many a year. From some lingering respect to the Sultan's authority, the Aneiza spared the Pashah's

troops and turned all their vengeance against their Arab enemies. The cry was—"Let alone the *Nizâm* and kill the Jerboah,"—which accordingly they did as long as they stood. As for the cannon, the ignorant rovers of the desert did not seem to understand what they were; at all events, they knew not how to use them: so they remained on the field until the Pashah's troops, encouraged by the forbearance of their foes, took possession of them unopposed, and retreated with no small rapidity to the shelter of the city wall.

Such was the state of things when I reached Baghdad. Fear of the Aneiza had driven in every villager and gardener, and all the petty Arab tribes that were wont to encamp in the country around, within the walls; and all who had flocks of sheep or herds of cattle, or camels, in the vicinity, took refuge there also in the ample empty spaces left by the inundation. This adds assuredly to the populousness and life of the place, but it also adds most disagreeably to the uproar and confusion of its streets. It is these flocks and herds to which I have alluded as passing and repassing my window every morning, and making their presence known by such a din; and when we attempt early of a morning to pass through certain streets, or to issue from the gates, it is well if our patience be not quite exhausted before a passage can be effected. Is not this a pretty picture of a province which should be one of the most flourishing and productive of the whole Turkish empire?

November 20.—Since my last date we have ridden and walked about a good deal. We have tra-

versed all the habitable quarters of Baghdad, and visited most of the objects worthy of attention. Among others, the tomb of the fair and witty Zobeidah, the wife of Haroon ul Rasheed. I have little, however, to remark about it, save that it consists of a singular obelisk-like spire, set upon a very ugly, tall, octagonal base, the lower part of which, I presume, contains the place of sepulture, but I did not go in to see. They make a work about these things here, which I wished to avoid, and my curiosity regarding Mussulmaun mausolea has been too much blunted by disappointment, on most occasions, to be very keen upon this. Nor shall I entertain you with either the raptures or musings that may have risen in my mind at the tomb of this celebrated beauty, to whose name we all attach some pleasing youthful recollection, and which is connected with much juvenile amusement, though assuredly, so far as my elderly imagination would permit, the days when she sat and amused herself, like her lord and master, with listening to tales and adventures, failed not to rise before me. But the palace of the Khalifs is gone—even its sight is unknown; the glory has departed from the land, and the spirit which once inspired its sons and daughters, has fled to other realms,—so leave we the dust of Zobeidah to its repose, and turn to other scenes.

Amongst the objects, which next to the number of wild-looking Arabs, are apt to arrest the observation of a stranger in his walks through Baghdad, I think may fairly be placed the multitude of white asses, and intensely black and exquisitely ugly negro

slaves that swarm in all the streets and bazaars. For the former there is quite a craze here;—white is your only colour for a donkey, and you scarcely meet any person of respectability, man or woman, mounted on anything else than these spotless quadrupeds—except, indeed, the more warlike classes, who despise anything under the grade of an Arab steed. Most of the learned and holy professions prefer the meeker animal, and so do all the ladies; so that the number in use is very great; and as women of the higher ranks seldom move without a multitude of attendants similarly mounted, when such a visit is made at the house of a neighbour, the braying concert becomes intolerable. These asses are, I believe, of a particular breed, and fetch very high prices—from forty to fifty pounds sterling being no uncommon sum for one of great size, good blood, and fine paces. They are magnificently caparisoned, and every one of the poor animals has its nostrils slit, a practice prevalent also in Persia, and which is said to make them longer winded.—Heaven knows their wind is long enough when they begin to bray.

The rage for black slaves here is quite as universal as that for white donkeys, and, judging from appearances, I should suppose that the uglier they are, the more they are valued—like an isle of Skye terrier, whose beauty consists in its especial and perfect ugliness. These dark beauties, male and female, come chiefly from Madagascar and Zanzebar, and are supplied for the most part by the Imaum of Muscat—a very staunch and worthy ally of ours, in whose hands nearly all of the trade rests. They are all

thick-lipped, have broad faces, high cheek-bones, exceedingly depressed noses, small peaked chins, staring white eyes, and atrociously black skins. Far be it from me to advocate the opinion that a few slight anatomical differences prove negroes in general to be a race intellectually inferior to the whites; but assuredly, if *these* are endowed with much intelligence, Providence was never pleased to enshrine high mental powers in a less inviting tabernacle. Here, however, you find them greatly preferred, to all others as servants, both in the Harem, and for other offices. The streets swarm with them, and their glossy skins, fat shining faces, and gay apparel, lead at once to the conclusion that they fare well; a fact sufficiently notorious from the well-known partiality of Turks, in common with most Orientals, towards their slaves; and the impudent swagger, and not unfrequently insolent language of the dark rogues as they pass you in the street, leaves no doubt of their being the spoiled favourites of some over-indulgent master. The enjoyment of this species of luxury is, however confined to the faithful; no Christian or Infidel, of whatever cast, being by law permitted to own any slave. Nor is this the only distinctive prohibition; for by law neither Christian nor Jew ought to appear riding in the streets of Baghdad. In the days of Daood Pashah they did not dare to show themselves mounted, either on horses, mules, or donkeys; but in the more lax times of Allee, these rules are sometimes broken through and trespasses overlooked. I need scarcely add that Englishmen, indeed Franks in general, are

exempted from these restrictions, and may ride as freely as they please.

Another and scarcely more pleasing feature in the crowd which frequents the bazaars, appears in the visions in dark blue with black masks, which slip about in little yellow boots, and which you are told are women. Heaven knows, disguised thus, they appear like anything rather than the *fairest* part of the creation. Their great wrappers of dark blue, or blue and white cloth enveloping the person from head to foot, effectually conceal both figure and dress, while a veil of black but thinly woven horse-hair, protects the wearer's face completely from the regard of passers by, at the same time that she can see perfectly all that passes before her. I have laughed when accident has occasionally removed one of these dark skreens, to see behind it a face still blacker than the friendly mask; but sometimes it does also happen that the lovely face of some youthful Georgian lurks under the envious veil, and I have felt a strong inclination to stretch forth a sacrilegious hand, and withhold for a moment the eclipse of a vision so delightful, yet so rare in these parts—the sight of female beauty;—in fact no better disguise than these hideous shrouds, with which females when they go abroad deform themselves, could have been invented by Oriental jealousy to scare away prying eyes and damp the spirit of libertinism. In them youth and age, deformity and beauty, wear the same aspect, and the idea suggested by every female thus clothed is that of a frightful old hag, clad in the garb of poverty and meanness.

Yet does this uninviting exterior, in fact, protect the forbidden fruit from longing eyes? Alas! the inexhaustible tales of love and of intrigue, with the tragical catastrophes which generally close these dramas of romance and crime, tell a far different story, and prove, too surely, that the maddening force and consequence of pent-up passions in these, as in all other countries, is the same. In fact, full well is it known that these forbidding veils do often shroud the choicest beauties of the harem—young and lovely women, and, whether fair or otherwise, as gorgeously apparelled as the means of father or of husband can afford. It is on the persons and apartments of his women that the Turk lavishes the wealth he fears to display abroad. His public apartments may be mean, the carpets old and worn, the cushions soiled and threadbare, nay, the shawl which wraps his head or waist may be shabby, or only an imitation of the true Cashmere; but, depend upon it, the chambers of the forbidden place are not only comfortably, but luxuriously furnished. Could you enter there, you would see the carpets of Herât and Kermanshah, the numuds of Khaeen and Tuft; the chintzes of India or of England; the broad cloths of Yorkshire and Gloucestershire, and the silks of China, of Yezd, or of Cashân, ornamenting, or rendering comfortable the apartments of his women. You would see their heads covered with the finest shawls of Cashmere, or the richest brocaded handkerchiefs of Lyons; their persons clad in the most gorgeous velvets, and wrapped in the most expensive furs. You would observe their

ears, their foreheads, and their necks, glittering with jewels; their hair entwined with pearls, their fingers covered with sparkling rings, and their whole appearance, as well as all around them, denoting wealth and luxury.

Nothing, indeed, can be more splendid in colour or material, than the dress of the Turkish ladies of Baghdad; but I fear that, without accurate drawings, it would be almost impossible to convey to you an idea of their costume. So far as I can learn, the Turkish fair one wears, in the first place, a long chemise of some fine gauze-like stuff of silk of various colours, which opens in front nearly to the girdle being clasped at the neck with some rich jewel. This chemise is very handsomely embroidered round the neck and down the bosom, and its long loose sleeves, which appear hanging out from the open wrists of the vest, are beautifully worked with gold and silver and various-coloured silks. Over this, when not sufficiently rich, a sort of front still more exquisitely adorned, and extending from the neck to beneath the waist, is worn by some; but I suspect this piece of dress is chiefly used to conceal a deficiency of fineness in the shift. Over the chemise, is worn a long-skirted vest, fitting tight to the shape, so far as the waist, with tight sleeves, which, however, are left open nearly as far as the elbow. This is made of all sorts of rich stuffs, silks flowered and plain, brocades, shawls, velvets, &c. and ornamented with embroidery of every kind, according to the taste of the wearer. Over this some wear a short jacket of similar stuff, lined with

some fine fur, sable or ermine, and also richly embroidered: but I am told it is now more fashionable to use the *kiurk*, as it is called, or long gown of fur. The large long trousers, which are nearly hid by the rest of the dress, are usually of some fine and gorgeously coloured silk. But it is in their head-dress and jewels, that the Turkish ladies chiefly show their taste for elegance and expense. The former, which is here called Bashlogue, is usually formed of either one or two silk handkerchiefs, or a shawl, wound round the fez, or red cap, the national covering for the head, worn by all Turks, Christians, and Jews, male or female, under the Sultan's rule. It is composed of red felt or cloth, having a large tassel of blue floss silk at top, and those worn by the ladies are generally very tastefully embroidered with pearls. Sometimes the colour of both tassel and cap is changed to suit the wearer's fancy. Around this the shawl or handkerchiefs are wound in forms assuredly far superior to any I have seen exhibited in the toques or turbans of ladies at home. The finest handkerchiefs made use of are, I believe, chiefly from the looms of Lyons, although very beautiful ones are made and embroidered at Constantinople; but I can neither describe to you nor exaggerate the exquisite taste and delicacy of their fabric. They are of all textures and hues, covered in the most tasteful manner with wreaths of flowers, embroidered in every shade of delicate colour, mingled with gold and silver. These are so twisted and disposed, by winding them round the head, as to

display the embroiders to the best advantage, and yet without the smallest appearance of art or constraint, and the end is made to hang down, on the left side, with an easy and peculiarly graceful fall. The shawls used are always the finest Cashmeres, and are fringed with gold and silver ornaments, or pearls and other jewels. In putting on this head-dress, the hair is so platted and wound about the turban as to form of itself an ornament, and one or two long braids hang down behind, and end in a tassel of gold coins or jewels. On one side, under the turban, but so as to come partly into view, a rope of strings of pearl, looped together with precious stones, is hung and twisted with the hair; and quantities of pearls, in various forms, are hung around besides, according to the taste or caprice of the wearer. As to the jewels most commonly worn—how shall I describe them in all their variety of form, and place, and colour! There is the *jikah*, or pine-shaped ornament placed on one side, and the *teeta* on the other, and the *Aeen-e-goonee* in front, depending towards the forehead, all of diamonds, and rubies, and emeralds. And then there are a thousand smaller butterflies, and clasps, and pins, and pendants, not to be enumerated or described. In short, the Turkish lady's head-dress, with its full portion of jewels, forms a rich and dazzling whole, which strikes you at once as gorgeous, beautiful, and tasteful, but which mocks description.

Then the ears are furnished with pendants, and a number of necklaces, diamonds, emeralds, pearls,

and chains of gold, encircle the throat, and fall down upon the bosom. The arms, midway between the shoulder and elbow, are bound with *bazubunds*, or armlets, which are generally of great value; the wrists, in like manner, glitter with an unspeakable quantity and variety of bracelets. The waist is encircled with a zone of velvet clasped with a boss of gold and precious stones, the zone itself, of the rich, being set round with diamonds; the poor contênt themselves with less valuable stones and fine work in gold. To conclude, the fingers are, one and all, covered with innumerable rings, set with stones of finest size and rarest water, nay, the very toes are jewel-clad, and if they do not, like those of the lady in the nursery rhyme, make music, they at least sparkle and glitter with every movement, and thus doth the Turkish lady stand or move, a thing of dazzling light and lustre.

I forgot to mention, among the ornaments of the hands and feet, a curious sort of ring worn upon the thumbs and great toes, it is shaped somewhat like half a thimble, the broad side being worn uppermost, and set with brilliants or other jewels; and—I beg pardon; there are the slippers—the pretty little useless slippers—equal to those of Cinderella, but you shall see a pair. These are susceptible of any ornament which suits the taste or riches of the beauty whose feet they scarcely serve to protect from the rich carpet on which she treads, but as they are only used in moving from one room to another it is of less consequence.

From all this you will perceive that the dress

of a Turkish lady not only is very gorgeous and magnificent, but that its cost may be indefinitely increased according to the owner's means, as its style of ornament may be varied according to her taste. I wish I could add that the minds of the fair wearers were as highly adorned by accomplishments as their persons are by dress. But from all the accounts I have been able to gather, this is far, very far being the case. In fact, the ignorance, frivolity, and indelicacy of the women of rank in Baghdad is stated to be painfully remarkable, nor is it easy to conceive how it should be otherwise; for what opportunities of improvement can they have, either from example or precept? What models have they to imitate? Trained up to please a master, who, in his domestic character, is often little better than a brute; to dress, and paint, and smile, and constrain themselves to suit the humour of their lord, who could not, and would not value any exhibition of intellect or mental power in his married slave, what better is to be expected than that they should, for the most part, become soulless, mindless puppets?

So far as I can ascertain, they have no occupations, at home, except those, if such they can be called, of dressing, arranging their clothes and jewels, smoking, and drinking coffee, gossiping with their slaves, or with the Jew women who come to furnish them with stuffs, toys, and jewels. They play with their children when they have any, but they have no notion of educating them; that duty is left to the share of nurses and *gouvernantes*. Their

great pleasure is in visiting one another, and their visits are sufficiently characteristic, if such an epithet can be justly made use of in speaking of beings who nearly make good the libel of Pope upon women, by having "no characters at all!" They seldom, if ever, proceed to a visit alone, or even with but one or two attendants. A whole household, of perhaps two or three wives, with sisters, aunts, cousins, daughters, slaves, servants, children, and nurses, make a move at once like a little colony or small flight of locusts, and settle down upon some friend or neighbour, who must bide the brunt and entertain the whole flock—a matter which, as due warning is not always given, especially when the visit is made by the great, is frequently no easy task, so that there is no small hurry-skurry and runnings to the bazaars and to neighbours for supplies of the requisites for an entertainment. A visitation of this sort does, not unfrequently, include from forty to fifty of these gay souls.

On such an occasion whatever business there may chance to be must come to a stand—the hostess or hostesses and their slaves must perforce strike work, and it becomes a general holiday. Then begins the clatter of tongues and the laughing and the gossip; for, roused from the *ennui* of their own house, or the constraint of their husbands' presence, the Turkish fair ones can at least be gay enough; and being gay, there are not more noisy beings in the world. I really have no wish to be unjust or justly severe—nor indeed to say aught but the truth; but the voices of the women here seem all

to be formed on one scale, and that is, the roar of an Arab who converses with a friend at the other extremity of a crowded bazaar. They all scream and halloo at such a pitch, that when they all speak together, as is generally the case, the effect somewhat surpasses the uproar made by their donkeys below, which is not saying a little,—yea, verily, I suspect on the whole, that of the donkeys is the more sufferable of the two; and this I do not take altogether on information; for, in passing in the street by a house honoured by the presence of a female party, I have listened to the noise of both, and really the palm appeared to rest with the ladies. But they are not altogether content with their own noise, nor with the delights of their own conversation. They must have singers and dancers to assist; and, to be sure, when these are in full swing, and the chorus of applause bursts from the assembly, it is the very perfection of uproar—old Babel in its confusion was but a joke to it.

I wish their noisy and untuneful voices were the worst point in the beauties of Baghdad. But, uneducated as they are, it is their indelicacy, their meanness, and gross inquisitiveness that are most calculated to disgust persons of more cultivated minds. It is dangerous to let a party of them loose among choice and curious things; for they fall upon them tooth and nail, put them in utter disorder, or pull them to pieces; long for them,—nay, ask for them, and sometimes very unceremoniously, —occasionally even by stealth, possess themselves of what they admire. As for their conversation, it is

marked by anything rather than reserve or delicacy, and in point of subject can of course soar no higher than the limited sphere of their education and scope of their minds. A lady-like carriage they are sometimes said to have, and many of them are kind-hearted and good-humoured; and I fancy these qualities, with individual exceptions, which no doubt exist, form the chief sum of their social virtues. The germs of others may have been born with them, but have withered through neglect, or been smothered by the more luxuriant growth of hypocrisy, and frivolity encouraged by the state of society to which they are unhappily confined. Well may the women of Europe, and of England in particular, bless that kind Providence which has preserved them from so degraded a condition; and well may the men of these more favoured realms be thankful for the blessing they enjoy in partners fitted in all respects for the high state of intellectual refinement which they have attained. Let both lay these blessings to heart, and be cautious how they consent to disturb too far or rashly a social system which, under God, has been the means of bestowing on them so much happiness.

I have said nothing of the lower orders of women here, because they are more or less the drudges which necessity makes them in all countries. As they rise in the scale of wealth and ease they imitate their superiors. In the streets, you see the Arab women going about unveiled and in very mean garb, covered with the eternal abba, their persons stained with innumerable blue tattooed marks, and

the married ones bearing on the side of one nostril a gold or silver ornament, like an immense filigree-work button, and anklets and bracelets of silver or brass, according to their means. The Armenian and Catholic women dress, I believe, pretty much as the Turks do; but the Jewesses have a different attire, of which I am ignorant, and the Armenians of other places have also their peculiar costume. All the female costumes of Baghdad vary, I am informed, considerably from those of Constantinople.

After this long treatise on female dress, you will probably excuse me from entering into a particular detail of that of the men. The two predominating costumes are those of the Turk and of the Arab. The former wears a loose vest tied round the waist with a shawl, over which is thrown a benêsh, or cloak of broad cloth, generally embroidered. In cold weather he wears a jacket, or coat lined with fur beneath this, and a large turban of white muslin or shawl round his head. The Arab dress, I have already described; and have only further to add, that the mixture of garbs and colours, with the glitter of arms and appointments, make a tolerably amusing and lively display.

LETTER XII.

Visit to the Pashah—his Appearance and Character.—Murderous Passages.—The Kiayah and his officers.—Disgusting Clamour of Servants for Presents.—The Pashah's Avarice and Credulity regarding the Transmutation of Metals.—An adroit Adept and a successful Experiment.—Dervishes—their three classes—the Collegiate — the Endemic — the Peripatetic.—Story of Maamoon-ul-Mustapha.—Visit to the invulnerable Dervishes—their Tricks and Impositions.—Visit to the Shrine of Sheikh Abdûl Kâder.—The Nugeeb.—The Shrine and Mosque.—The Roman Catholic Church and Vicar.

I HAD almost forgotten to mention to you, that a day or two after my arrival here, I went to wait upon Allee Pashah, for whom I had brought a letter from a certain Sheikh-ul-Islam, or some very orthodox person at Tabreez. I met with a reception courteous enough; but assuredly nothing less expressive of state could well be imagined than the attendance about his Highness, nor of dignity than his manner and appearance.

The entry to his dwelling, for palace it could scarcely be called, is as mean as possible, and the attendants that appeared were quite in keeping with the place — a few shabby-looking Albanians, some Turks smoking, and a knot or two of ill-clad ill-looking officials; nor was the person who ushered

us into his presence much better. We found there a fat man about fifty years of age, clad in a fur beneesh, with a fez upon his head, sitting in a very moderately furnished outer apartment, open on one side entirely to the court. There was a tolerable carpet on the floor, and the cushions and musnud we sat on were covered with crimson silk.

The Pashah was a fat man, as I have said, with a good deal of the Tartar countenance, but not an unpleasing manner. He conversed with me a good deal, speaking Turkish to my Persian; and on the whole, was well enough for a Pashah: but there were too many persons present to admit of his opening out, as I was told he was likely to have done had we been alone. The room was well filled with persons in Turkish, Arab, Persian, and Koordish dresses, and there was no want of talkers; but as little is to be gained from such conversation, I rose as soon as propriety permitted; and, taking leave of his Highness, went to call on the Kiayah, who sat in a dark room down a passage sombre enough looking, at some distance. It is in these dark passages, in the serais of Princes and Pashahs, that so many murders are committed. A poor fellow, suspecting nothing as he passes along them, has a shawl thrown round his neck from behind, is jerked on his back, and strangled before he can utter an "Allah!" or an Albanian from a side-door discharges a blunderbuss into his abdomen, or shoots a pistol-bullet through his brain, and no more about it till the headless trunk is seen exposed in the *maidaun*. Something of this sort had occurred, as

I was informed, but a short while since in this very passage; I got through it safely, however, and found the Kiayah, who had been the general of the beaten army, sitting in his corner, with a colonel of the regulars and an officer of the Albanian horse near him, besides a host of nondescripts lining three sides of the room, come to congratulate him upon his late exploits, I suppose; for by their own account, it would appear, that though they fled they nevertheless performed great things. The commander of the artillery swears that he fired five hundred rounds from his guns, and that each round killed fifteen of the enemy. He does not say *more*, as he likes to be within the mark, and to be believed: nevertheless, somehow or other, they were forced to retreat—that he admitted.

A very short visit here sufficed: we took coffee, smoked a pipe or two—at least they did, not I—and I made my retreat from the serai, beset by a whole host of his Highness's servants with demands rather than requests for presents, preferred in the most importunate tone. This, both here and at Constantinople, is a most disgusting nuisance; but it is worse here. *All* the servants of any great man you may visit here expect to be fed, or to receive some present from the stranger, and so completely has this abominable custom become part of the system, that servants lay their account with such fees as part of their wages, and to avoid compliance is impossible. Every one has some point to gain, and pays accordingly. *Employés* fee the great man's servants that they may secure friends

at court, while they in turn are *tipt* by their own hangers on; and thus has it become so universal a custom, that one cannot make a common visit without feeing the whole household. At the serai, it is absolutely abominable: the numberless attendants beset one like banditti; and to such an extent is the compulsion carried, that the soldiers on guard will sometimes cross their bayonets and refuse to let you pass until you come down with your coin.

I know not whether I should return to the subject of the Pashah, as it is one on which I have little agreeable to say; but a sketch of Baghdad, however slight, would be very incomplete without a few strokes of the pencil devoted to describe its present master. The exterior of Allee Pashah I have already given you. His mind is not more attractive than the casket which enshrines it. He is weak of judgment, infirm of purpose, irresolute in action, gross in his appetites, selfish and avaricious. It is said that he is not naturally disposed either to cruelty or injustice, but dislikes so much to have his mind disturbed by exertion of any sort that, rather than submit to such annoyance, he will suffer others, unchecked, to commit the grossest crimes; so that his servants take advantage of this weakness and his avarice to oppress the people, assured that he will quarrel with nothing which brings him money and leaves him at rest. He is said to be good-natured and possessed of considerable literary acquirements; and I have heard from good authority that his Turkish verses are far from despicable; but he is altogether a person of low and grovelling

propensities, and totally unfit for the high and very responsible situation he holds.

Amongst other pursuits, the Pashah is greatly devoted to the science of alchymy, and it is said spends much money upon Dervishes, Kalendars, and other adventurers, who pretend to be adepts therein. If report may be trusted, it is not altogether spent in vain; for there is a man now here, who, it is averred, has actually succeeded in transmuting brass into gold, and lead into silver. You may be sure that such a report was enough to awaken curiosity, and I resolved, if possible, to see the alchymist, or at least some one of the persons in whose presence the transmutation had been performed. It turned out, upon inquiry, that the experiment had been made before the Pashah himself and an Italian, a M. de Marquez,* who had charge both of the mint and the arsenal, under the late Pashah, and has been continued in the same by the present, and who is moreover an exceedingly clever person. From this gentleman I received an account of the business, which, if it does not absolutely confirm all that was reported, at least serves to prove that the Pashah has to deal with no common impostor. The man, who is an Arab, and who had been working in the laboratory for several months past in preparing his elixirs, &c. and who had received a good deal of money for the purpose of carrying on the work, at length announced that he was ready to make trial of his art. More than sceptical on the subject, or

* I do not know whether I have written this gentleman's name correctly or not.

believing only in the roguery of the adept, M. de Marquez resolved to watch the process very closely, in order to detect the imposition, weighed with his own hands and put into the crucible the brass which was to be transmuted, and which he himself had provided; the charcoal made use of he likewise examined; and the process was conducted with the apparatus and in the laboratory of the mint. In the course of the work, the man required a certain and very small portion of white and yellow arsenic, and M. de Marquez, in order to prevent possibility of any trick, sent for the article to a shop that he could depend upon for providing it genuine. He even put it into the crucible himself, nor did the adept approach it at all except to put in a small quantity of a certain powder —less than that of a small pinch of snuff—which he took from a little box with a small spoon, like an ear-picker. M. de Marquez himself poured out the melted metal when ready, and took possession of it. On examining it when cool, he saw that a portion of it, which adhered to the mass in clots and pervaded it in lines, had actually become gold. This mass he weighed; and finding it somewhat heavier than the brass which he had put in, he demanded of the Arab how this had come to pass. The man instantly put him in mind of the arsenic which had been added, and which, united with the brass, would make up the exact amount. M. de Marquez afterwards performed the same experiment himself, and found that the result was as the adept had said.

The mass was then submitted by M. de Marquez to the action of aqua fortis, which dissolved the remain-

ing brass but left the gold untouched—this being weighed proved to amount to one-third of the whole mass. On being requested to state why the whole had not undergone transmutation, the adept explained that the process was only an experiment and, consequently imperfect, being but the second (I think) he had made with these materials. The next he expected, if not quite complete, would leave little imperfect; and that when by these means he should have found the just proportions of his materials, the whole mass subjected to their influence would undoubtedly be transmuted. The gold being assayed and subjected to the touchstone in the Bazaar, proved to be perfectly good and marketable metal.

No was M. de Marquez's general character renders it absurd to suppose that he should connive at such a fraud as we must suppose this Arab to have practised — his place and profits being too valuable, independent of character, to risk for the paltry advantage he could expect to realize from such unworthy means—I find myself bound to credit his story, and do, in fact, implicitly believe it, although it may only serve to show the extreme adroitness of the legerdemain which could baffle the acuteness of a remarkably clever person so fully on his guard to detect it. M. de Marquez was too cautious to venture a decided opinion on the subject; he only declared his resolution of watching the adept's movements, particularly in the course of a still larger experiment which was to be made in a few days. I expressed a strong wish to be present at this experiment, but on inquiry and

consideration the attempt was given up, as it could not have been done without the risk of exciting the Pashah's jealousy in a point on which he was peculiarly sensitive. I afterwards learned that the result had been rather a failure, and the man expressed a desire for permission to go to the Koordish hills I think, to gather certain materials of which he was in want; but the Pashah refused to let him leave the city, suspecting, no doubt, that he might not find his way back. A strange thing this mixture of faith and mistrust! The Pashah *hopes* and strongly believes in the success of the man's attempts; and yet, overlooking the very things that should open his eyes and destroy these hopes, he clings to them in the face of his better judgment. We went one day to visit the alchymist in his workshop. He was a stoutish common-looking fellow, with nothing of genius in his looks or of boldness in his address. He had just taken from the furnace a crucible of *white*-hot stuff, a dose for the prince of the lower regions himself, in point of abominable stench, and it threw out a succession of brillant scintillations, as if it had a mind to destroy us all for our impertinent curiosity. The man was at the time in a sort of honourable confinement, and I suspect that if he does not soon manage to return some of the Pashah's money in the shape of gold ingots, he may as well turn his inquiries to the discovery of rendering himself invulnerable, or proof against the bowstring; as in all probability, a more protracted disappointment of his Highness's expectations, may lead to an intimate acquaintance between his neck and that instrument.

De Marquez told us, that several such persons had been induced by the Pashah's avaricious credulity to attempt the same game; of these some had fallen into the net they had spread for his Highness, while others had succeeded in cheating him of considerable sums. He lamented this credulity greatly, while he obviously despised the weakness which caused it; and it was evident that he believed the adventurer of whom I have been speaking, would turn out at least as much of an impostor and rogue as the rest.

Of Fakeers, Kalendars, Dervishes, and mendicants and vagabonds of all descriptions, there is no scarcity in Baghdad — it is indeed their proper and congenial home; and though they do not all profess to make gold, they contrive to pick a comfortable enough livelihood out of the charity and superstition of the faithful here. There are, besides the wandering brethren, several colleges of these people here, as at Constantinople, and these, too, handsomely endowed. The members of these societies do not openly or clamorously beg, although they do not refuse the gifts of the charitably disposed; but they elicit money by various means, particularly the performance of pretended miracles. Not only do they give charms against illness, wounds, and evils of all kinds; but there is a class who assert that they themselves are invulnerable to steel and incapable of being burned by fire. These fellows assemble every Friday at the tomb of a certain saint of their order, and exhibit their miracles to the wondering people, who come and

gaze upon the saintly conclave. But before giving you an account of a visit I myself paid to these fanatics, I am tempted to transcribe for your edification a few particulars respecting the Dervishes of Baghdad, which I abridged from some papers of a friend upon that subject.

Of Dervishes in this place, it appears that there are three great bodies:—first, The Collegiate, or endowed Dervishes; secondly, The miscellaneous mendicants, who may be termed Endemic; and thirdly, The Kalendars or Peripatetic saints.

The Collegiate Dervishes are maintained by revenues, which are respected by even the worst of governors; some of them are men really devoted to study and contemplation, others are fanatic enthusiasts, while the greater number are sensualists, drunkards, or eccentric fools. They wear a conical felt, or quilted cotton, cap, fringed occasionally with coral, or adorned with needle-work of coloured thread, a dark coat and sandals. They carry occasionally an iron mace or axe, and a black vessel hollowed from the fruit of a species of palm, which they suspend by a leathern thong. They are also marked on some part of the body with the sign peculiar to their avocation and order, and have a particular sign and countersign.

The members of their respective colleges are bound, on every Friday eve at least, to assemble in a circle before their superior, in a place which is open to the numerous devotees and curious spectators of the city. In the middle are placed brasiers of lighted charcoal, with swords, daggers, and long

sharp iron spikes fixed on thick handles of wood furnished with numerous movable iron rings, which produce a jingling sound when agitated. A brother of the order sings to a mournful measure some hymn in praise of the Deity, expressed in dim peculiar metaphysical terms; or a sacred elegy on the death and sufferings of some martyr, accompanied and governed by the vibrations of a tabret sounded by some other of the fraternity. For a time all is quiet and solemn; but at length one or more of the brethren slowly rises, and slightly rocking to and fro, repeats the words "Haq! haq! Hoo! hoo!—Hoo-ul-Haq!" meditating at the same time on the perfections of the Divinity, his movements become accelerated, and form themselves gradually into gyrations, until from the velocity of his motions and the violent rapidity of his exclamations, his lips become covered with foam, his eyes closed and prominent, his long locks form a sort of halo round his head, his face becomes livid by exertion, and at length he falls exhausted, inanimate, and bathed in perspiration.

Excited by the sight, others follow this example of adoration, until the profane spectators around, inflamed almost to frenzy, rush forward to inhale the breath and receive the blessing of the superior; and seizing the swords, daggers, and spikes, cold or heated, on the brasier, brandish them aloft with the dance and gestures of Bacchanals, and striking their bodies with the weapons, or passing the burning irons over their own faces, with invocations to some patron saint or martyr, or the word Hoo!

at length fall to the earth, some wounded and streaming with blood, some unhurt, but rolling like men possessed, some torpid and immovable. The wounded in this conflict of knavery with enthusiasm and devotion, are held to have suffered for unexpiated sins; while the pure, aided by the breath and blessing of the superior, have escaped unhurt. Serious accidents often arise from these exhibitions, which are repeated at the will and caprice of any scheming Seyed, whenever he may choose to tax the sincerity of his disciples, or increase the influence of his saintly character and spiritual authority.

Begging is rare among this order; but when they do condescend to solicit alms, it is merely by the repetition of the word "Haq!" or "Hoo!" in a sharp or deep sonorous tone, and few disregard the sacred appeal, such refusal being supposed to be invaribly followed by misfortune to some of the family. They alone can gain access into the inmost court or recesses of a dwelling, fearless of punishment and regardless of hinderance; and hence their power of depredation or of gaining information which sometimes appears miraculous. Some of this order have been so completely led away by the force of imagination, and perhaps by the effects of repeated assumption of supernatural power, as publicly to assert themselves to be the Divinity himself, exclaiming continually "*An-ul-Haq!*" — "I am the Truth!"—that is, the Eternal Author of truth. But this audacity, when incurable, has always been punished by the temporal powers of Islam with death.

You will observe that these observations include several sorts of Collegiate Dervishes—that is, both the dancing and whirling Dervishes, often described in works on Constantinople; "the howling Dervishes," who are also found there; and those who pretend to invulnerability, to whom I have made allusion above.

The second class, which has been termed Endemic,—that is, spread abroad among the people at large, is to be found in most Eastern cities. These assume numerous garbs and guises, suiting their costume, manner, eloquence, and gestures to the different objects from whom they hope, by these instruments, to extract alms. Their appearance, therefore, and air are as various as possible: one, for instance, a quaint spare creature, with skin deeply embrowned, black beard, and mustachios nicely trimmed, neatly attired in a clean white cotton turban, brown camel's wool vest, bare feet, and staff in hand, but eyes sightless and sunken in a still expressive face, advances with elevated visage, although with doubtful and cautious gait; and in a pleasing tenor voice, chants forth as follows:—"O ye debtors of the Almighty! give to me of his bounty and he will release you from your debts!—ye that are sorrow-laden rejoice the heart of his servant, and he will temper your griefs." His audience mingle their gifts with jokes and sneers, which the Dervish receives with patience, and retires with the alms he has obtained to his corner in the mosque, at once his place of abode, of meditation, and of prayer, and where he

soon recovers the use of his eyes, until it becomes necessary again to stimulate the faithful to an exertion of their charitable sympathies.

A second, a squat and well-conditioned fellow, with a thick, short, grizzled beard, a chubby face, and small oblique grey eyes overshadowed by shaggy brows, a large thick-lipped mouth, with huge straggling omnivorous fangs; his person clad in white cotton, over which he wears a white Arab abba, stops at the gate of some wealthy-looking mansion, and from his deep lungs bellows forth a eulogy on the Prophet, combined with praise of divine benevolence, and charity to the naked, the hungry, and the needy. He is sure of his mark, two Nubian slaves, a male and female, rush forth towards the portal with different purpose—the first to drive away the intruder, the second to afford him assistance. The clamour of the disputants is added to the howlings of the mendicant; but the female prevails, and the good things of the mansion's owner are poured into the ready wallet of the sturdy beggar.

A third may be seen, a lank shadowy being, with loose sinewless limbs—a perfect skeleton, a specimen of how nearly the living may resemble the dead. Toothless, hairless, dim-eyed, clothed in a bundle of rags, without a staff to sustain his trembling limbs, he drags his half-inanimate carcass from door to door; and, extended on the earth, he leaves appearances to plead his wants. Pitied and relieved, he is at length sent to his wretched home

in a basket; but it is only to return on the morrow to his haunts, again to move the public compassion, and again to be relieved.

The third class, that of the Peripatetics, or Kalendars, is composed generally of the best-informed, as well as the most energetic and youthful of the race. These are the alchymists, the astrologers, the mantists, the schismatics of the pauper world. Their fortune is ever changing, but their presence of mind is ever found equal to every emergency. They are generally mystics in religion, of pliant morals, quick apprehension, ready wit, firm courage, and vigorous frames. They are fond of throwing over their shoulders the untanned skins of lions, tigers, or antelopes. They suffer their locks to grow at will, or twist them up into fantastic shapes. They are seldom without arms; and counting on the proneness of devotees to a belief in the supernatural, they are always well provided with the means of producing some striking chemical phenomena; with philtres, charms, and various instruments of divination, to aid their pretensions to prophetic skill.

The history of Seyed Maamoon-ul-Mustapha, a young man born in one of the valleys of Assyria, affords a good specimen of the spirit of this class. While under process of being educated for a Moollah, he was seized with a desire to travel; and in spite of the remonstrances of his family, left his house. He was a tall, stout, fine-looking youth, of fair complexion, and dark eyes, and he entered

on his travels with a light heart and bright anticipations of future joys and wonders. After long wanderings among the *Maugrabins,* the supposed magicians of the Moslems, he was on his way towards the Joghees and Brahmins of India, when he entered Baghdad, and took up his abode in the college of Moostanser, attending the theological lectures at that time particularly delivered to zealous sectarians. His mind, however, remained unsatisfied, his reason unconvinced. He felt himself superior to those around him; and at length, restless and objectless, he retired into the recesses of a neighbouring mosque, where he continued some days without tasting food.

The keeper of the mosque, attracted by so singular a piety, endeavoured to rouse him to go abroad in search of sustenance; but the result of the interview was, that he believed he had been dealing with a saint, and he declared himself a devoted disciple of the ascetic, to whom he not only brought food, but inlisted the feelings of the neighbourhood in his favour.

Maamoon contrived to maintain the deception of his miraculous nature of existence, by feeding on a very slender portion of the ample stores set within his reach, and his fame increased daily. Barren women craved his blessing and his charms, the blind besought him to restore their sight, the lame that he should restore the use of their limbs. The disappointed alchymist entreated for an effectual elixir; neglected wives kissed his feet for attractive philtres, and seekers after the supernatural ex-

pected from him those miracles usually attributed to magic, such as riding in the air, the power of invisibility—of breathing flame—of transforming human beings into quadrupeds or birds—dust into golden sand, or counters into coin: but the strangest part of the delusion was the belief which each petitioner entertained, that what he himself wanted was actually granted, and the voice of the believing many drowned the murmurs of the doubting few.

Things were in this state, when the assistance of Maamoon was solicited by a merchant, to recover some stolen property and point out the thief. A degree of modest diffidence only served to persuade the merchant of the holy man's power, and produced an offer of large gifts to aid his previous entreaties. But the saint was still coy, and the merchant's offers rose till they terminated in a surrender of house, establishment, and child, to the man of such pre-eminent sanctity and wisdom. Installed in the merchant's dwelling, Maamoon made minute inquiries into all the circumstances of time, place, and person, connected with the robbery, and intimated to the merchant that, on a certain day, he should assemble all his servants, in order to undergo the effect of certain incantations, which he then departed to prepare.

Secluding himself from the whole family during the interval, he appeared at the appointed time before the subjects who were to undergo his exorcisms, clad in garments of black silk, and wearing his own raven locks loose and dishevelled, so as nearly to conceal his face, bearing in one hand a

brazen pot of fire, and in the other a small dark-looking pouch of drugs and amulets. Of the drugs he silently threw a small portion on his censer, from whence there arose a dense smoke, and highly penetrating odour, which, acting in conjunction with the moral excitement of the scene upon his audience, who till then had been seated, caused them all simultaneously to start up with an ejaculation of "Allah!" Even the owner of the stolen property, smitten with compassion for the terrible fate which seemed likely to await the yet unknown thief, bent forward, as if to arrest, if possible, the progress of the incantation; but awe kept him silent, and the magician proceeded.

Taking now from his pouch several dark-coloured billets, he steeped them in the perfume arising from the censer, and uttered in hollow tones, the following invocation:—"Lord of all worlds! thou mighty Providence of nature! whose sacred essence pervadeth all matter, grant to me now a portion of thy energy!" With these words he advanced towards the suspected persons, who had now become a prey to intense emotion. The symptoms were various, but striking in all; one remained standing upright, but his stiff arms, convulsively fixed to his sides, hard-shut mouth, fixed eyes, dry skin, and livid circle round his compressed and colourless lips, betokened his mental agony. Another writhed like a snake, and every muscle worked convulsively, while drops of perspiration poured down his skin. In a third, every extremity was in motion, the lips worked involuntarily, and the

muscles of the scalp writhed as if violently pulled by cords. A fourth fell upon the floor, foaming at the mouth, rolling in frightful agitation, and making ineffectual efforts, as it seemed, to articulate.

The agony of the culprits, and the emotion of the spectators, warned Maamoon to bring the scene to a close. Leading, therefore, the merchant apart, he said, "Permit a charitable veil to be thrown over guilt so clearly proved, and so severely punished. Let each man, at midnight, cast a lapful of earth in the angle of the court beneath the polar star, and on the rising of the sun seek there for your property."

The search was probably successful, as the holy man's fame, and the belief in the power of his spells, increased so greatly, that the first men of the state were numbered among his devoted adherents. Secrets of alchymy, charms against wounds or the chance of misfortunes, or loss of royal favour or of office, were eagerly demanded of him, with full confidence in their efficacy, and splendid rewards were offered by others for permission to partake in so enviable a species of power: but this was not the mystic's game; his power he declared was incommunicable, and unattainable by any, save those who were especially favoured by Providence. Such excuses, however, did not satisfy all; and there were some who, disappointed or envious, resolved to watch the sage's proceedings more closely. Unfortunately for himself success made him bold, and led him to practise his deceptions with less caution.

Suspicion aroused, soon increased, and circumstances came to light which led to conclusions very adverse to his character. A thirst of gain, too, growing by what it fed on, seduced him into acts of gross peculation and fraud, for which the confidence reposed in him by his disciples and other dupes, gave him ample scope: but the spell of his influence was already broken; exposure at length took place, and was rapidly followed by disgrace, punishment, and ruin.

So much for the notes of my friend: I return to my own observations. I mentioned a visit which, in company with some of my Residency friends, I paid to a shrine frequented by the Dervishes who pretended to invulnerability.

After a certain number of the Dervishes had assembled, and a very moderate audience, the former took their seats in a circle, remaining quiet and as in meditation for a while, when up started one of them, who stripped himself naked to the waist, and going into the tomb where the swords, daggers, and pikes were deposited, he seized two of the second, and began to parade up and down a small space surrounded by his brethren and the spectators. At first his motion was slow, as if wrapt in meditation; but after a while he accelerated his pace, and began brandishing his weapons, until gradually his movements became leaps and bounds, and his arms were flourished about with a rapidity which almost mocked the sight. On watching him, however, you saw that the daggers, at each movement, were raised and brought down upon his own person,

as if he designed to wound his head, his shoulders, or his belly: but the daggers were curved, so that the points did not strike fairly; and he dexterously hit his sides with his arms, so as to stop the edge of the weapon from coming down directly upon the place aimed at. Besides, no one examines the condition of the weapons, which doubtless are not over sharp. With all these precautions, however, wounds are received, whether accidentally or by design, I know not; but when I saw the farce, one of the fellows was bleeding from the skin of the abdomen.

He next seized a sword, or two, and the same frantic exercise was repeated, pretending to cut himself in various places. Nay, having placed the edge of the sword upon his stomach, he permited another to seize it by the hilt and point, clasping him round the waist, and pressing the edge upon his person, and thus he actually raised and swung him round and round, the whole of his centrifugal force pressing his stomach against the edge of the weapon. It is asserted that they occasionally place the edge of a sword upon the stomach of one of their brethren, while lying on the ground on his back, and stamp upon the back of the weapon, and yet no wound is produced; but this I did not see. Neither did I see them thrusting iron spikes, red hot or cold, into their eyes and other tender parts, as generally they affect and appear to do, without sustaining harm, so that I cannot say how that part of the exhibition is managed; nor did I see any of the fire-proof miracles at all, such as seizing the said spikes while red hot,

and rubbing them over their bodies and faces; but I saw enough to convince me that the whole was a very impudent farce, got up to impose upon a most gullible auditory, and that the odium of appearing to lack faith must be a very efficient protection for these sanctified cheats, against the dangers of a too impertinent inquiry.

On another occasion we paid a visit to the shrine of a very celebrated Soonee saint; named Sheikh-Abdool-Kâder, to whose honour a most superb tomb and mosque have been erected here. To this shrine flock all the Indian pilgrims, as well as those from Affghanistan, Bockhara, and Toorkestan. It was not without some difficulty, or at least some questioning, that we obtained permission to view the interior of this holy edifice, which is under the control of a certain clerical officer, called a *Nugeeb*, or *head* of the saints of the place, and who is understood to be a lineal descendant of the original saint himself. It is a situation which once was far more important than since the inundation and the accession of Allee Pashah. Before these events, this quarter was inhabited by all the vagabonds and scoundrels of the place; fellows who, feeling in danger even of the lame arm of Baghdad justice, sought refuge under the shadow of this great saint. It was here that all thieves and rogues were to be found—all bullies and assassins. It was the "Alsatia" of Baghdad, over which, and its worthy inhabitants, our friend the Nugeeb generally exercised a pretty fair portion of control; and they repaid his protection by yielding him a certain limited

degree of obedience, and by guarding the precincts of his dominions against all interlopers. In fact, few of the Pashahs dared ever to interfere with the arrangements of this nest of desperadoes and their saintly protector, far less to send either officers or troops against them. Even Daood Pashah, although a man not to be trifled with, as he showed by deposing the Nugeeb, and occasionally firing cannon into the quarter, in order to quell the spirit of turbulence that reigned their—even Daood could by no means work his will there; nor did he think fit to run the risk of rousing too far the spirit of religious fanaticism, by measures of extreme severity. In short, none dared to enter the quarter, except those who could make themselves welcome to the ruffians who resided there; and as for a party of infidels like us approaching it, we might as well have proceeded against an army of mad bulls.

It is true that Mr. Rich not only visited the Nugeeb, but was permitted to go through the place; but his way was smoothed by handsome presents to that great man, and since then only one party of Franks, we were assured, had ever entered its walls; and that since the period I have alluded to. But the scene had greatly changed—the plague had made a clean sweep of the ruffian inhabitants, and the inundation had dealt equally freely with almost every house in the quarter except the shrine itself and its immediate dependencies, which has experienced an increase of celebrity and sanctity for an immunity which it owed, no doubt, to the depth and solidity of its foundations—all else re-

maining were ruined walls, and the few new houses which have since arisen. The impudent defenders of the quarter are no more, and the quarter itself is open and free to whomsoever pleases to visit it.

We were ourselves the third party who proposed to view the place, and the Nugeeb at first stickled for the same presents which he averred he had received from Mr. Rich; on my informing him, however, that we were mere travellers who, though desirous of gratifying our curiosity, had no idea of paying so high for it, he returned a gracious message, and we went. He received us with a sort of condescending civility, in a miserable little room, the walls of which were of raw unplastered brick. If this was a show of humility, it was ill supported by his personal equipment, which was handsome and costly; for he was clothed in rich silks and fine furs, and had on his head a magnificent turban of cashmere shawl—somewhat inconsistent in a dervish; but saints and *wullees* are now-a-days privileged people, and this man is said to be extremely rich. His conversation was somewhat constrained, and he uttered some sentiments expressive of self-denial, which assuredly did not come from the heart, as he is at bottom a notorious breaker of the law, especially in the article of strong liquors, of which he is a great admirer. Indeed, I take it, that when this Alsatia was in its glory there was more wine and *arrak* consumed here than in all the rest of the city put together. In person the Nugeeb was a large, tall, fair-complexioned Turk, with a high

nose and prominent blue eyes, and his manner was not ungraceful.

After pipes and coffee, the unfailing attendants on a Turkish visit, we repaired to the shrine and mosque, which were worth the trouble. The tomb is placed under a dome in an octagonal (or square) apartment ornamented as usual with laquered tiles, bearing verses from the Korân, and tolerably well carpeted. It is placed under a canopy of green silk and inclosed with a high railing of solid silver, which, strange to say, was the gift of a Jew. This person was the Serraff, or banker of one of the Pashahs, who one day accompanying his master on a devotional visit to the shrine, was informed that it was usual for strangers to make an offering, and asked what he was prepared to give. "Why," replied he, "if such is the custom, I must follow it no doubt. Let me see—this railing is at present made of copper,—I will have it exchanged for one of silver." The Jew's liberality was highly applauded, and he probably lost little by it in the end.

The mosque is a very large building, partly occupied by verandahs and lateral oratories; but having in the centre a space right under the dome occupied by a fine large apartment of great altitude. This room, which is a square of, I should think, from seventy to eighty feet each way, is well lighted from above by windows, and furnished for night with a number of lamps depending from the ceiling. The lower part of the side-walls and *mectâb*, or reading place, are ornamented with laquered tiles, and

it is handsomely carpeted, so as altogether to have more the comfortable air of a gentleman's drawing-room than the chill solemnity so common to such places of worship. It is said that this mosque can conveniently accommodate three thousand persons at once at prayer. It is surrounded by a square of building, containing cells, like a caravanserai, in which pilgrims from various parts may dwell, and where they are fed from the revenues of the establishment, which are said to be very large. Among the various Indians that were here I looked for some from those parts of the country with which I was acquainted, and particularly from Dehlee; but there were few such to be found. One only hailed from thence, and he had not been there since the days of Ochterlony; but he had known the two Skinners, and a few others of my acquaintance; and had it not been for a taint of that impudent air of assumption which these Dervishes so constantly assume, and which savours much of the ancient spirit of the quarter, I could have regarded him as a sort of old friend.

Another of our peregrinations led us to ascend the old minaret already alluded to by Buckingham, from the top of which we had a capital view of the tops of the houses of Baghdad and some of the market places near, which were crowded with people; but as such a bird's-eye view of an Eastern town cannot be very interesting, except, perhaps, early in the morning, it did not detain us long, and so we went from thence to the house of a French clergy-

man, who is vicar-general of all the Catholics in this part of the world. His flock here, indeed, is small, not exceeding a thousand souls in Baghdad, of all sorts and ages: nor do the prospects or circumstances of the church of Rome appear to be improving in the East; for he tells me that, of no less than *five* convents in Ispahan, there is only one that is not in ruins, and that one is, I believe, occupied by two servants. In the church here, a very poor building, there was but one object worth seeing; and that was a picture which had been brought some considerable time before from Bussora, and which, so far as I could judge, was very beautiful. It was a Virgin and child, the latter standing and holding some flowers, or a bird, I think, in his hand; but the light was so bad, and it was so ill-placed, that there was no examining it without having it taken down. It appeared to me the style of Annibal Caracci, and was probably a copy from one by that master. I understood that it had been brought to Bussora by the Dutch some hundred years ago.

Our friend the vicar was a pleasant enough but most talkative little man, who bemoaned himself sadly at having been left so long in this savage country, where he enacts not only the part of head of the Romish church, but that of agent to the Pope and for the French Government. But they all appear to be very bad paymasters, for he is forced to eke out his means by other methods. To this end he keeps a very tight hand over his flock,

and not a soul gets out of purgatory without a handsome *douceur* being paid to the terrestrial agent. Nay, there is one family among them whom he contrives to keep pretty constantly in that uneasy state in this world, by denying to the head of it, who lately died, all exit from that limbo of purification, until they pay him down a swinging sum for masses—he declares that the man was a great sinner, and that his conscience will not permit him to release his poor soul without signal reparation.

LETTER XIII.

The City invested by the Aneiza.—Disorderly State of the Shrines and Sanctuaries—Causes thereof.—Excesses of the Yerrim-mâses. —Death of the Shah of Persia. — Roads infested by Banditti.— Reports. —Quarrel with the Ageil.— History of that Tribe— their Settlement in Baghdad—required by the Pashah to quit it.—They refuse to move.—The Tribe musters.—The Bridge is cut and fighting commenced. — Various Reports. — Application for the Resident's Boat — manned by the Turks. — Fire drawn on the Residency.—Boat crosses.—Troops land.—A Rush along the Bridge.—Pillage and Uproar.—Rumours and Reports.— Plunder.—Ageil quit the Town.—Loss of the Troops—their Atrocities.

Wednesday, 28th November.

THE game which was played by Suffook and his Jerboah is now in course of being played over again by the Aneiza. Baghdad, since our arrival, has been in a state of actual blockade. None can go beyond the walls for any distance without the greatest probability of being plundered, particularly on the west side of the river. I was anxious to go to *Agerkoof*, a remarkable old ruin, contemporary with those of Babylon, and believed by Colonel Taylor to be the actual site of the *Accad* of Scripture ; but our friends the Aneiza have made it one of their *points d'appui*, and we dare not venture there. They have now stretched themselves across the *Jezirah*, from

the Tigris to the Euphrates, occupying the road to Hillah, so that no one can go in that direction—and in fact none is secure, for not only they, but every scoundrel, Arab, and thief belonging to and in the neighbourhood of Baghdad, is out plundering under their name. Many poor creatures have come in stripped naked, and no caravan that is not of great strength will proceed in any direction.

The Pashah is said to be negotiating, and, according to his old policy, endeavouring to sow dissensions between the several divisions of the tribe; he has called in another tribe too, as usual, the Zobeid (or Zuboid), to his assistance: this is destruction to himself and to the country; but it is his wretched policy. The Aneiza, however, or those who take their names, appear to pay little attention to these negotiations. Several of the Pashah's own officers have been stripped close to the gates, among others, one Eussuff Beg, who held the office of *Bâb-ul-Arâb* — the gate of the Arabs, — that is, the official means of communication between them and the government, and who was one of the Pashah's *Musahebs*, or privy counsellors; and this has so exasperated his Highness that he now says he will not treat at all. Only two days ago, too, firing was heard on the west side of the river, near Zobeidah's tomb: it turned out to be an Aneiza plundering party, that swept the country of camels, sheep, and cattle, up to the very walls.

All this is severe on travellers, to whom, like myself, delay is both inconvenient and distressing. It is also particularly so upon the numerous Per-

sian pilgrims, who come from distant parts, poor creatures! to visit the tombs of Hoossein and of Allee at Kerbelah and Nujjeff Ashruff. Some whose zeal had tempted them to brave the clutches of the Arabs, have returned stripped to the skin, and without seeing the shrines; and if they did reach them, it appears that their chance of safety is not much improved. It is a singular fact, and a most pregnant proof of the utter weakness of the Turkish government in this province, that almost every shrine of peculiar sanctity has been made, and continues to be a sanctuary for the most abandoned and worthless of the community. This probably originates in the indiscriminate nature of the protection they afford, and which, as a matter of course, is principally claimed by the worst of offenders; but it is a privilege of which the *moot-wullee* (or governor), and priests or servants of the shrine are too jealous, to permit interference with, by the secular arm, on any pretence whatsoever. Thus evil characters accumulate — probably they pay well for protection — till they are able to command it, as in the case already related of the quarter of Sheikh-Abdool-Kâder in Baghdad itself. This state of things had obtained to a far worse extent both at Nujjeff and Kerbelah: the multitude of disorderly persons collected there had increased so much, that neither the governor of the place nor the authority of the Pashah could control them; and they not only did just what they pleased, but exacted from the pilgrims who came to the shrine, the most unreasonable concessions, and in default of

compliance plundered and stripped them, and often took their wives and daughters from them. The evil became at length so crying that Daood Pashah sent a force against Nujjeff and succeeded in reducing it to obedience, so that though still a disorderly place, the blackguards who infest it do not go such lengths as formerly.

Kerbelah is still rebellious. The *Yerrim-mâses* (literally careless reckless fellows), or ruffians and bullies of the place, who amount to a large number, not only repulsed the Pashah's army, but have now so completely got the upper hand, that no one can either disobey or offend them with impunity. They have established a secret mode of communication which none but the initiated understand, and by which they can rally a force at a moment's warning on any given point; and all the respectable inhabitants stand so much in awe of them that they dare not attempt any measures for opposition or even for self-protection. It is not long since an Indian Nawâb, connected with the family of the Carnatic, who had for some years taken up his abode at Kerbelah, fell under their displeasure. They assembled, took and plundered his house, and destroyed his whole effects without any one being able to prevent it, and he himself was forced to fly for his life from thence to Baghdad, where, I believe, he still remains. They even carry their audacious libertinism so far, that whenever they hear that a pilgrim has a pretty wife or sister with him, they will send for her; and if refused, either steal her away by stratagem or take her by force; and it

has frequently happened that men's wives have been thus missing for a week, and have returned in a wretched condition. I heard one Persian myself complaining of having had his wife carried off, but I cannot say that his grief appeared overwhelming. Is not this a state of things that calls aloud for vengeance and reform?—it is only one of a thousand instances of the misrule and anarchy that make their strong appeal to the observation of those who pass through the country, proclaiming the misery of its people.

Another affair, which some days ago was but a rumour, but which has now been confirmed as a fact, touches me still more nearly. The Shah of Persia is dead, that is past doubt; and the probability is, that all the roads to and through that country will now be impassable. All we have yet heard goes to confirm the belief that Hoossein Allee Meerza, the Prince of Fars, who had gone to meet his father at Ispahan, and whose backwardness in paying the tribute due from that province to the Shah was the cause of the old man's journey to Ispahan, has seized upon the crown and jewels that were along with the king, together with the treasure; and, having struck coin and assumed the ensigns of royalty, has declared his intention to assert his claims to the throne of Persia. This may have a powerful effect upon my movements, and may occasion very serious detention. We shall see.

December 1.—The Arabs still remain at Agerkouf and on the Hillah road, so as to prevent all

excursions on that side; but they are certainly quarrelling amongst themselves, whether from the effects of the Pashah's policy, or from the increasing scarcity of forage and plunder, is uncertain, yet they beat up the country unopposed to the very gates of the town. Letters from Shuster have come to hand, which state the country to be in a most turbulent condition; that several caravans have already been plundered, and that no more will venture on the road; accounts from Hamadân and Kermanshah correspond with this; but little more is actually confirmed than the fact of the Shah's death at Ispahan.

December 3.—The accounts from Persia seem all to confirm the report that Hoossein Allee Meerza has proceeded to Tehrân and proclaimed himself King, and that being joined by his brother, Hassan Allee Meerza, the latter had drawn the sword in earnest and cut off the heads of sundry of the Princes who either had refused to acknowledge his brother or were suspected of having views of their own; that the Ameen-u-Dowlut had joined him with some of the powerful nobles, and that he had got possession of the ark or palace of Tehrân, with the treasure; that not a word had been heard of the heir-apparent, Mahommed Meerza, and that all as yet was quiet at Kermanshah; but that the tribes had broken out and were plundering to right and left, so that there was no safety for travellers. One of the *cossids*, or foot couriers, who brought in the news, meeting near Baghdad with a caravan in which was one of the old Shah's daughters, who

was returning from a pilgrimage to Kerbelah, that Princess ordered his nose and one finger to be cut off as a reward for his evil tidings, and in this condition he reached Baghdad.

December 4.—The tedium and uniformity of our lives has this day been broken by the excitement of an unexpected incident—no less than a regular Arab fight *within* the walls of Baghdad; but before describing the battle, I must explain what led to it.

Matters between the Pashah and the Aneiza had been hourly getting worse, and the disturbance of the country kept increasing, so that as I have already mentioned, people even of respectability were plundered at the very gates; the tribe itself becoming also divided into parties, there was reason to fear that the other Arab tribes around might be induced to take part in the dispute, and the whole of Mesopotamia be thus set in a flame. At length, it so happened that several of the Pashah's own officers were plundered close to the city, and the outrage being traced to some Arabs of the *Ageil* tribe, who lived in the western portion of the city, his Highness was so much enraged at the insult that he determined upon taking immediate and signal vengeance on the perpetrators.

These Ageil Arabs are part of a tribe said to be very large and powerful in *Nejd*, or the high central land of Arabia, who, in consequence of an arrangement entered into with Solymaun Pashah some sixty years ago, have monopolized the trade of guarding and guiding the caravans which go

between this place and Aleppo and Damascus. In order to furnish the guides required, this tribe have always been in the habit of keeping a certain number of their people at Baghdad under a Sheikh, but till lately they had not been permitted to reside within its walls; within these two or three years, however, a quarrel, originating in rivalry, has arisen. Not contented with driving away their opponents, the Ageil, seizing a rich caravan which their rivals had conducted from Aleppo to the vicinity of Baghdad, declared, that if their demands were not complied with, they would plunder the caravan and leave the country. The Pashah, too weak to protect the caravan, the arrival of which was impatiently looked for in the city, and the duty on which to come into his own pocket would, he knew, amount to a considerable sum, complied with all they required, and among other indulgences granted permission for a detachment of the tribe to reside in Baghdad, provided they remained exclusively on the western side of the river.

The Ageil came accordingly, and since that time have been perfect masters of that half of Baghdad. Like the Yerrim-mâs's of Kerbelah, and of the Sheikh Abdul-Khauder's tomb, they protected from the arm of the law all vagabonds and reprobates who took shelter with them, and not a soul could reside on that side of the river, but such as they chose to permit. In short, *they*, and not the Pashah, were the governors of their quarter; and his Highness had long writhed under the sense of their insolence, resolving, yet not daring to, repress and

punish it, when this last affair occurred, and, as I have observed, roused him to an extraordinary exertion of ire. He sent them word to quit the city at once, peaceably, on pain of being turned out by force; but it is not the fashion in the Pashalic of Baghdad to obey the Pashah's commands; so the Ageil refused to move, unless on terms which the Pashah did not see fit to comply with. This occurred yesterday morning, and the Sheikh of the tribe, probably alarmed at this unusually strong demonstration, went himself to the Serai to remonstrate with his Highness. In the mean time the tribe mustered together, to prepare for the worst, and when we assembled together at breakfast at the Residency, we remarked from its windows an unusual degree of disturbance on the opposite side of the river: people were running here and there, and collecting together in groups; and our glasses showed us that they were armed.

By the time breakfast was over, we saw the bridge becoming crowded with people: *gooffas*, the round basket-boat used upon the river, were rapidly passing and repassing. There was evidently a great commotion, and it appeared that some persons were trying to cut the bridge on the western side of the river. Colonel Taylor and Dr. Ross immediately predicted a battle. "You will probably see them begin just there, on the bridge," said the Colonel; "it was exactly so they did last year, when Suffook came against the place:" and, sure enough, scarcely had he spoke the words when the bridge was divided, and a shot from the oppo-

site side showed that the battle was begun. It was followed by half a dozen more, and the bridge was soon cleared, when the fire was immediately answered from our side the water. A party of regular infantry then ran across the standing part of the bridge, and taking post in the boats which protected them, kept up a fire upon a coffee-house opposite, from whence the Arabs discharged their pieces; and then a pretty lively rattle of musketry took place. This continued for perhaps two hours, during which time the only victim we heard of, was a poor old woman, who caught a stray shot as she was hobbling over the bridge as fast as she could.

Various were the reports that now poured in: some declared that the Pashah had seized the Ageil Sheikh, and with him his own *goomrookchee*, or custom-master, a notorious scoundrel, and put them both to death; others asserted that the Sheikh was safe in his own house on the other side, and that the Arabs were only waiting to assemble in force for a grand attack. About noon we heard that the Pashah had re-instated the Sheikh, and put his own shawl about his head, and that there was to be nothing more but peace and good-humour; and sure enough the fire, which had fluctuated till then, freshening up and slackening by turns, nearly ceased. But just as Aga Minas, one of the people of the Residency, was telling us of this good news, a salvo of cannon was heard. "Ah!" said Dr. Ross; "there go the guns; that is a salute for the happy termination of hostilities." But the quick

rattle of musketry and a continued fire of cannon which succeeded and increased, told another tale, and we all ran up to the top of the house to learn; if we could, what was going on. The date-trees, however, hid the combatants from our view, although the smoke of the guns and the sharp roll of musketry, convinced us that there was some earnest fighting.

We learned, then, that the fray had first been occasioned by a report reaching the Ageil that their Sheikh had been executed by the Pashah's orders; on which they had divided themselves into two bodies, one of which came down to cut the bridge and fire upon the town, while the other rushed out of the northern gate, to attack the troops who were encamped there, and surprise the guns. In the mean time the Pashah, whatever might have been his first intention, alarmed at the explosion, had given the Sheikh, as we had heard, a dress of honour, and sent him back to quiet his people, while secretly he sent over word to the commander of his troops, on the western side, to attack the Arabs in the rear—indeed, we saw the boats passing with the Turkish officers to the camp; but the Arab movement had anticipated the effect of this order, so that the messenger, when he came, found the troops already engaged with the Arabs. So sudden had been the rush of the latter, that before the troops, or their commander, knew whether those who so rapidly advanced were friends or foes, they had got possession of one of the guns. The troops then flew to arms, and the Arabs were in turn

driven off by the rapid fire of the other cannon, and the musketry of the Nizam; a running fight took place round the walls to the Hillah-gate, which both parties entered pell-mell together. This was the cause of the sharp renewed firing we heard, and, to judge by the rattle, it was, I assure you, what Captain Dougald Dalgetty would have called a very pretty onslaught.

About two o'clock P.M., while this was going on, and a regular cannonade was kept up, both on the western side, near the Hillah-gate, and from two cannon on the eastern side, which played upon the opposite end of the bridge and the coffee-houses that were filled with the Arabs, an officer came from the Pashah, to beg that the Resident would lend him his large English-built yacht, to carry over a reinforcement of troops and ammunition to his people, who were engaged with the Arabs on the other side. It was by no means an agreeable request, as, if complied with, it might appear like interfering in the local quarrels of the place; but as the Ageil were certainly in open rebellion against the Pashah, it seemed but right, as friends, to assist the legitimate authorities as far as might be possible, so the boat was cleared and made ready for their use.

The Turks are slow animals; they took a long time to get their men into the boat, and when on board, she was found to be aground and would not stir. But the boat's berth being just under the Residency's windows, and the troops assembling there being speedily observed by the Arabs on the

opposite side, they mustered strong upon the beach and buildings there, and kept up a hot fire upon all in and about the boat across the river. It is true that the breadth here was at least two hundred and fifty yards, but the balls came smartly along the water, sometimes ricochetting, and often striking the Residency. One of them, indeed, hit the wall within a few inches of Colonel Taylor's head, as he stood looking over the parapet with his glass, and several of the troops in the boat were killed or wounded; so that we were fain to shelter ourselves from their effect behind projecting parts of the terrace wall. After all, we were in little danger, for by watching the flash, we could generally draw back so as to avoid the ball.

This sort of amusement continued for more than two hours, when the boat, being at length got afloat, fell down the stream and delivered us from the somewhat uncomfortable notice of our friends on the opposite side. I must say for the Turkish soldiers, that, awkward as they were about the boat, I saw no appearance of flinching among them, even when the shot came pretty thick, and hurt several of them; and in the same way on the bridge, more than one attempt was made to reunite it and to cross, and parties continued all day firing at the Arabs from the boats where they were very imperfectly sheltered.

At length the yacht, after frequently grounding and drifting a good way, made good its transit to the opposite bank, where, strange to say, no opposition was made, and the troops, to the number of

about one hundred and fifty, landed and soon disappeared behind the date-groves at that side of the town. The firing of cannon and musketry, which had continued both within the body of the western portion of the town and from the eastern side across the river, now began to relax; the Arabs probably had been much incommoded by a great gun from the castle, which had been brought to bear upon their position, and were more cautious of exposing themselves; the sun too had got low before the troops had landed, and there was an interval of suspense, only interrupted by an occasional shot here and there, and by the drums and fifes of the Nizam. On a sudden, however, the loud rattle of musketry and the roar of the cannon at once re-commenced—a loud shout proclaimed that the troops had joined their comrades. The noise, too, approached the river, and, looking at the bridge, we observed troops mustering on that also; in another moment they made a rush forwards, firing rapidly. The fire was sharply returned from the other side for a few moments, and then it ceased; but as the columns were not twenty yards asunder, it must have done much execution. We saw a little basket-boat push across the gap, and the bridge was re-united: the mass of men evidently crossed, but by that time it had become too dark to see more; and there was an interval of deep suspense; this, however, did not continue long. The firing ceased, but in its place there arose a wild yell—shouts of men mingled with cries of women, and all the sounds of terror and confusion and despair. In another

minute the river was covered with the basket-boats, called *gooffahs*, which ply upon the Tigris, and which at the beginning of the fray had been hawled up on the bank. It was clear that the troops were in possession of the town, and plundering and pillaging in all directions. Dropping shots still continued, but they were only the wanton discharge of muskets by riotous soldiers, blowing open a locked door, or putting to death some wretch uselessly resisting. The uproar came nearer and nearer to the water-side, and we soon counted more than thirty *gooffahs* or basket-boats crossing at a time, filled with fugitives. It soon became pitch dark, but the noise continued unremittingly for three hours, mingled with shrill shrieks, after which all was silent, and the city became as still as if no such event as we had witnessed had occurred to disturb its tranquillity.

We heard it was the Toffunchee Bashee that spirited up his men to make the dashing movement along the bridge, and which was worthy of better troops. The Arabs, on seeing their resolution, had given way, and the troops passed. The bazaar near the bridge was plundered in a moment, and the work of pillage now began. It is said the Sheikh has sent terms to the Pashah, with offers to quit the town to-morrow, provided certain Arabs shall be protected, and this, they say, he has agreed to; others say he has sent for the Aneiza to enable him to keep the town: it would be like his strange temporizing policy; but we shall see to-morrow.

December 5.—This morning, at an early hour, the streets were thronged with fugitives, many of

them almost naked; others, more fortunate, were carrying whatever they had been able to bear off on the first alarm. The women were wringing their hands and sobbing and wailing; the men, sullen and sulky, or clamorous and abusive, were carrying their guns and other arms. The quantity of cattle in the town had become increased, and every lane and passage was crowded. Reports vary as to what has become of the Ageil; but the most probable state, that when the rush of the troops over the bridge was made, they found themselves between two fires, and fled on all sides, retiring muskets in hand to their houses to guard their property. The troops discovering this, and knowing that they probably had little to lose, quitted pursuit, and turned their attention to the bazaars and the houses of merchants and wealthy individuals, which they gutted clean, setting fire to the bazaars. Thus the blow fell heaviest on the town's-people, and not, it is said, undesignedly, as all of them are pretty well known to have taken part with the Ageil, and to have fired upon the Pashah's troops.

Half past nine, A. M.—Parties still hurrying past our door, stripped to the skin and weeping and wailing: the streets crowded with Arabs from the other side, both men and women; but no certainty what has become of the Ageil. Some say they are still in their houses, musket in hand, while the troops continue plundering the houses of the towns-folk—others think they have fled altogether. It is also said the Pashah has sent orders to the troops to desist from plunder, and has himself taken post

at the bridge to prevent them from bringing their spoil across; but he might as well try to stop the run of the river—they laugh at him, and he is powerless.

Two o'clock, P. M.—We hear the Ageil have certainly fled—moved out of town with their families and property, and, it is added, have gone straight to the Aneiza; but their Sheikh remained behind, and has taken shelter at the door of the Pashah's harem, an inviolable refuge, and he has been permitted to live as a private individual on condition of remaining quiet. During the whole morning and day, we have seen fellows passing with plunder—one dragging a sheep; another, a parcel of fowls tied by the legs; a third, a lot of pots and pans, bedding, or carpets; a fourth, who had made his way into the women's apartments, had got hold of a bundle of female gear, ornamented looking-glasses, gowns, handkerchiefs, &c. One of the Nizam brought for sale a horse, which he told us he had taken, and was surprised we would not purchase a bargain; another was driving two or three asses well loaded with great bags containing a mixture of all sorts. Gooffahs are still crowding on the river.

The Pashah, it appears, had taken his station in the coffee-house at the other end of the bridge from which the Arabs had been firing, and, as we heard in the morning, to stop the plunder; but this is said to be a mistake, for it is alleged now that he is encouraging the troops in their excesses, addressing the pillaged inhabitants with taunts and

shrugging his shoulders as he says, "You see what you have brought on yourselves — it is your own fault, not mine."

Accounts of the loss on either side, in this affair, are as yet too vague to be relied upon; but it must have been pretty sharp on the Nizam and Albanians, for one of the Residency people, who was at the Pashah's yesterday while the business was going on, heard a person who had come from the other side make a demand for cotton cloth enough to shroud twenty-four dead bodies, and this only out of one detachment. The commander of the gallant rush on the bridge, we heard, was shot through the head, and several of his people killed and badly wounded. The loss at the Hillah-gate must have been great on the side of the troops, as they stood exposed to the fire of the Arabs, who, fighting from behind stone walls, probably suffered but little: no estimate of their loss was attempted to be made. The chief mischief is in the town. The atrocities of the troops, though perhaps not greater than those committed by the more polished soldiery of Europe when a town is taken by storm, are shocking enough. The women were horridly maltreated, and this day the body of one was brought over who had been shot by a brute of an Albanian, while firmly resisting his violence. The bearers laid her down at the threshold of the Sheikh's tomb, and the Nuzeeb ordered that she should be buried with the honours of a martyr. Another of these miscreants, while plundering the harem of an Arab, being annoyed by the cries of a child, took and

threw it, as he thought, into a well. This exploit, of which he made boast, having come to the ears of the mother, she returned, when she dared, to look for the remains of her infant. They dragged the well for it, but in vain, and were about to abandon the search as fruitless, when their attention was attracted by a faint cry; and, seeking about, they discovered the poor little thing lying in the *tendour*, which is a sort of oven dug in the ground and lined with pottery, for baking bread, into which, mistaking it for a well, the villain had chucked the child. It was but little hurt, and scarcely bruised by its fall, and you may conceive the poor mother's joy.

One could not have imagined the populousness of the western side from its appearance on ordinary occasions. The bazaars are almost impassable from droves of mules and asses, loaded with furniture, with their drivers, although the shops continue closed from dread; and the bridge from one end to the other is a perfect sight, so thronged with crowds hurrying to and fro. The whole eastern shore was covered with groups arriving from the opposite side. The Haitahs are swimming droves of mules and asses across the river, and we see them still driving them down to its banks on the other side. It is a perfect scramble, and would be most laughable if it were not for the misery produced by it. One fellow pounces on a sheep while its unlucky owner runs away with its lamb on the other side. A woman in one corner might be heard rending the air with cries for her son or husband

who had been shot or drowned—for many of the *gooffahs* sank with their freights; another was bemoaning scarcely less piteously for the loss of her household goods, in the hands, perhaps, of a ruffian close by, who had pillaged her dwelling before her eyes. In short, outrage and plunder is general throughout the city, and the weakest everywhere suffers.

LETTER XIV.

Arrival of Sheikh Waddee and Solymaun Gunnum.—Visit to the Scene of Combat.—Appearances there.—Camp of the Zobeid Sheikh.—Costume.—Arms of the Arabs.—Stealing Horses—its Consequences.—Camp of the Haitahs.—A Boaster.—News from Persia.—Three Kings of Brentford.—Reports from Tabreez.—The Aneiza Decamp.—The Pashah's Arrangements.—Baghdad Police and Justice.—More Reports from Persia.—Sheikh Waddee.—Kauzemein.

DECEMBER 6.—This morning the Zobeid Sheikh Waddee and a party of his Arabs, together with Solymaun Gunnum, both of whom had been sent for, express, on the late emergency, arrived in the vicinity of the city. The latter, whom I have mentioned before as an ally of Allee Pashah's, is a bastard Arab of the Jerboah stock, who some time ago had been employed to convoy and guard caravans across the desert to Damascus during the time of a quarrel with the Ageil; but these, who had felt the sweets of the monopoly, took the measure I have already mentioned, of capturing a caravan under his charge, and making terms with the Pashah for being reinstated as guides and conductors of caravans—on the old principle, I presume, of "set a thief to catch a thief." The Zobeid Arabs are a tribe who possess a part of the country below

the line of the road to Hillah; they were once very powerful, but are now, from various causes, on the decline. Both these chiefs, being enemies of the Ageil, willingly obeyed the Pashah's call, which was made in the true spirit of his customary policy—it remains to be seen how he will arrange matters with them now that their services are not required.

In the forenoon we crossed the river to look at the scene of combat. The effects were less striking at first sight than I expected; for, in fact, the western division of the town was so squalid and ruinous that scarcely anything could make it look worse: but when you came to the bazaars and thoroughfares —the more inhabited spots—there you saw the mischief. Every door was burst open, and generally torn off its hinges; and at several of these sat a few old women, wringing their hands and beating their breasts as they gazed into their gutted houses—the dark, empty look of which was, God knows, depressing enough: the men who still remained, were sitting motionless along the sides of the streets, or stood listlessly gazing about them. A few of the coffee-houses, emptied of their contents, were occupied by men who, from their appearance, I judged to be merchants and shopkeepers, who had lost all they had possessed. Loaded mules and asses were still passing through the streets, generally driven by the Haitahs; and the streets themselves were strewed with broken furniture, feathers of pillows and bolsters which had been ripped up for their silk or brocaded covers, the

cotton and wool of mattresses too heavy to be carried off, and quantities of grain and provisions that had been thrown about.

The Bazaars betrayed the sorest tokens of violence. The burned roofs had fallen in, and the ashes were mingled with grain, dates, groceries, water-melons, pumpkins, and other vegetables—all things not valuable enough to be carried away; and the débris of what had been spoiled in carrying off, or left, was trodden under foot, with the broken shreds of the vessels that had contained it, into one disgusting mass of dirt, amongst which some dozens of almost naked children were paddling and groping, no doubt for something to eat. The cells and shops were all staring open, doors and shutters having been torn down—and lucky was it for the city that the greater part of it is built of mud and bricks, as, otherwise, the whole would have been burned to the ground by the wanton madness of the incendiaries.

We went to see the principal places of conflict. At the end of the bridge the damage was less than I had expected, as there were two heavy guns playing upon that point all day. It was at the Hillah gate that the chief tokens of the fight were to be seen; for here the chief struggle was, as here the troops entered pell-mell with the retreating Arabs. There is an open space inside this gate, where the troops and the guns took up their position, while the Arabs flew to the houses and gardens, from behind the walls of which they kept up a hot fire—it is a work they understand; while on their side the

artillery fired, it is said, five hundred rounds at their unseen antagonists. The houses and walls, consequently, are well bored with cannon-shot, whilst the gate has been soundly peppered with musket-bullets; but the troops suffered most, and would have been forced to retreat, their ammunition being expended, when the supply of that and of men, opportunely arrived by the Residency boat, and gave them fresh means and renewed courage.

From this scene of destruction we went to visit the Zobeid camp, which certainly was a sight worth looking at. In all my experience of Toorkomans, Koords, or wandering tribes, I had seen no such wild-looking savages. Their lank black hair hung around their black visages; and the only points of relief in the wild countenance which loured from under their strange head-dresses, were the dark piercing eyes and the white teeth. What would many a gentleman and lady in Europe give for such a case of incisors! There were at least one thousand horses and as many men, all mingled higgledy-piggledy together—a huge living mass of quadrupeds and bipeds, from among which rose a thick bristle of spears. The dress, if dress it could be called, of these Arabs, was the regular Buddooee, or desert cut—the yellow and red handkerchief bound round the top of the head with a thick rope of camel's hair — the coarse hair or canvass shirt — and the abba of every sort and quality: the most of them were very filthy and greasy. Some had no trousers, others no vest; some appeared to have no other covering than the tattered abba girt round

the waist with a bit of hair rope. Some wore their hair lank and loose, *au naturel*,— some plaited in long streamers; and the features of all were high and sharp. They were all long lean men, looking hungry enough for prey; but nothing savouring of such propensity was permitted to appear towards us, though in an instant they clustered about us in hundreds, as we made our appearance: yet though they evinced an excessive curiosity, it was quite unmixed with rudeness; on the contrary, when some of them pressed too close upon us, others would remonstrate, and then all would fall back to make room for our seeing the object at which we appeared to be looking; and here appeared the difference between the town or Fellah (husbandman) Arab and him of the desert, the Buddooee — or, as we call them, the Bedouin. The former is a boor, the latter a gentleman. Really, notwithstanding all their wild and fierce appearance, there was in their actions and demeanour a sort of native politeness, the more remarkable from the contrast, proceeding, no doubt, from the same indomitable spirit of independence which breathes in and produces a similar effect in the North American Indians.

We talked for some time very amicably together, and asked them how they would treat us if it should chance that we came in their way, whether they would not strip and plunder us. They affected to be shocked at the bare idea; and placing their hands upon their heads and eyes, declared that we should be as welcome and as dear to them, as these precious organs.

Cold though the weather was, especially at night, these men were all encamped upon the bare ground, with no other covering than the abba which they wore. Not a tent, except that of the Sheikh, was in the party, and that was a very small one. They lay all at random among the horses, looking like bundles of dirty rags blackening the ground. Most of them were armed with swords of the usual scimitar-shape, and a crooked dagger at the waist. Some had heavy iron maces, and many the *herbah*, or iron javelin, of five or six feet long, for throwing. The jereed, a still shorter javelin, made of iron, hung at many a saddle bow, to the number sometimes of six on each side, and these they throw with great force and dexterity. Some of them carried small hammers; and a few had sticks, of about a yard long, armed with iron hooks, with which they can pick up anything fallen to the ground, or pull a man from his saddle when at full speed. There were also a few guns amongst them, wretched clumsy engines; but the great weapon, after all, is the spear, of which, as I have said, there was a perfect thicket sticking in the ground, and without which no Arab thinks himself complete. It was generally planted close to the owner's horse.

Their horses disappointed me much; I scarcely saw one of decent appearance among the whole. No doubt the best had been taken with the Sheikh, who had gone to wait upon the Pashah; but I did expect to see more of the common order worth looking at. But they were not only small and lean,

but ill-formed, and deficient in all the characteristic good points of the Arab. In fact, the Zobeid, it appears, are by no means celebrated for good horses. If you ask them how this happens, they reply, "Oh! when we want fine horses, we go and plunder the Aneiza." This they once did, sure enough; but it nearly cost them their existence as a tribe.

They wished, it seems, to gain favour with the Pashah's Meerachor, or master of the horse, by giving him a handsome present; but not having any horses of their own good enough for the purpose, or, at least, not choosing so to employ them, they did contrive to steal away some dozen of the finest of those of the Aneiza, with whom, at that time, they were on the best terms. These soon discovered the robbery, and were at no loss to guess the thieves. They sent to the Zobeid, and taxed them with the theft. "We have been," said they, "as brothers with you, and we desire so to continue; we have had our horses stolen, and you are the thieves—we know it, so don't deny it, but return them to us, and be our brothers as before; if not, henceforth we are your enemies." The Zobeid swore by all that was sacred that they were wronged—that they knew nothing of the matter, and invited the Aneiza to send and look at all their horses. Now there is nothing in which an Arab is more dexterous than in disguising a stolen horse,—he would beat Yorkshire at that,—and they had succeeded so well with these, that the Aneiza could not distinguish their property among the others. But they remained unsatisfied. "It signifies no-

thing," said they, "you, and no others, are the thieves; and since you have thought fit to injure and insult us, and then to brave our anger, be it so; we are now your foes."

The Aneiza were as good as their word; and being a much more powerful tribe, soon managed to distress and persecute the Zobeid so much, that they became weary of the business, and resolved to set matters to rights if they could. Sending, therefore, to the Meerakhor, they besought him, for God's sake, to let them have back the horses on any terms. They then received and sent them to the Aneiza, with a humble acknowledgment of their error, and a request to be re-admitted to the privileges of friendship as before. The Aneiza refused: "No, no," said they; "you have proved yourselves to be men without faith—pitiful scoundrels, with whom it would be disgrace to associate; you have found it expedient to restore your stolen goods; but you never can regain our esteem — we continue enemies still." In truth, this quarrel with the Aneiza has very much tended to accelerate the decay of the tribe Zobeid.

From the bivouac of the Zobeid we went to the camp of the Haitahs, a little way off. This was another curious scene; it was full of plunder, which the captors were packing up and securing as well as they could. Every tent was stuffed with a mass of heterogeneous articles; and reed bedsteads, bedding, caldrons and cookery-pots, basins and ewers, men and women's apparel, &c. were piled in every corner, and gathered in heaps

around the bivouacs of the men, while the fragments of what had been destroyed, covered the ground. Multitudes of stolen animals were wallowing in heaps of stolen straw, and great bags of grain stood beside them: the creatures never were so well fed before. One of the fellows was driving a most stubborn pack of jackasses, who appeared by no means pleased with their change of masters; a second had caught two capital mules; and others were bestriding horses, followed by the poor owners, who besought the robbers to restore their plunder — a hopeless prayer — it was well when the reply was not accompanied by a wipe with the yatagan.

Of order, or appearance of discipline, there was little, and not a symptom of military vigilance. Every one was looking after his own affairs, and the officers did not seem to possess the smallest control over their men; indeed half of them were still abroad looking after more plunder, or disposing of that already obtained. Any moderately active body of Arabs might have surprised and cut up the whole camp; not a sentry was there either here or at the gate of the town; and even in the camp of the Nizam, which was in the act of being struck, there was an equal absence of watchfulness.

At the tent of the commander of the Haitahs, we took pipes and coffee. By his own account, he was the hero of the fight; but, indeed, so was each individual to whom we spoke, insomuch that we might have been sorely puzzled had we not known the sort of gentlemen with whom we had to deal.

Our friend in question did not appear to relish the praises we bestowed on the Nizam; nor would he even admit the merits of his own comrades who made the charge along the bridge. The men of his own *dusteh*, or troop, he assured us, bore the whole brunt of the action, and of them he had lost sixteen or eighteen during its course. He admitted, however, as did every one, that matters would have gone very ill but for the reinforcement of men and ammunition, sent across by the Resident's boat, and which arrived in the very nick of time. He told us that about two hundred had been killed and wounded on both sides; and as this agrees with other estimates, from various quarters, it is probably near the truth.

The news from Persia continues most unpromising. A caravan, eleven days from Hamadan, has arrived, with horsemen from Tehrân, Cashan, Ispahan, &c. The report from the latter part is, that when the old king died, his son, the Prince of Fars, assumed the regal insignia, and proclaimed himself King. That the Ameen-u-Dowlut, one of his late Majesty's ministers, took the crown and the celebrated armlets containing the Koh-i-noor and the Deria-noor diamonds, and made them over, together with the royal treasures to this Prince, who, paying the troops a year's advance, had taken the way to Tehrân. At that place we learn that the Zil-e-Sultan, a brother of the late Prince Royal, who was governor of the Ark, had shut the gates of that citadel and seized the royal treasures there, proclaiming himself King by the title of Allee Shah,

and striking coin with the legend "Yah Allee!" The Prince of Fars, Hoossein Allee Meerza, has done the same, substituting "Yah Hossein!" for the other. So here we have three Kings, Mahomed Shah, Allee Shah, and Hoossein Allee Shah, all at once in Persia. We only want Hassan Allee Shah to complete the family party, and that we shall probably soon have in the person of the Prince of Kerman, who bears that name with the glorious title of Shujaat-u-Dowlut.

The south of Persia is in a melancholy state. All the towns between Sheerauz and Bushire have been plundered by the Eeliaut chiefs; and a son of the Prince of Fars is playing the same game at Bushire itself. All the merchants and persons of property are quitting that place as fast as they can. There are many reports of princes and nobles being blinded or put to death, but nothing to be depended on.

December 6.—A man, forty days from Tabreez, has arrived, who declares that Mahomed Meerza and the English envoy were still then in that place; but that while he remained at Hamadan, information had been received that both had advanced as far as Zenjân on their way to the capital. Other reports are rife, but they tend only in a vague way to confirm what we have already heard — the only thing certain is, that the country is greatly disturbed.

December 11.—This day, reports which have for some time prevailed of the Aneiza Arabs being divided among themselves, and on the wing from the

Jezirah, are confirmed. It is positively stated that they are off, and that in a few days hopes may be entertained that the roads around the capital will be free from plunderers. The Pashah has arranged the business with the Ageil tribe by investing Solymaun Gunnum, the adventurer already frequently mentioned as Sheikh, for the purpose of guiding caravans; while the Ageil Sheikh has received permission to reside here, provided he consents to live as a private person. This is an arrangement quite in consistence with the Pashah's usual measures; for this Solymaun Gunnum being an illegitimate descendant of a Shummur Arab by a slave womam, no true Arabs will coalesce heartily with or yield him obedience; nay, as I have said before, he failed on a former occasion when similarly empowered, these very Ageil having driven him off as he was in charge of a large and important caravan close to Baghdad itself: but this is all forgotten, and consequences are disregarded — the present moment alone is provided for and considered.

Mr. Finlay, who has been our very pleasant inmate, and my companion in all my rides and walks, tired of waiting for the road being clear, resolved to try and prosecute his journey by the river; and, having made his arrangements, started in a boat bound for Bussora. But his first outset has been unpromising; for the boat had not proceeded five miles before she was stopped on pretence of having on board some horses that had not paid duty. A characteristic scene took place on this occasion: it appeared that the duties had

been paid; but, in consequence of some official arrangements or changes, not to the right person. Accordingly, two Haitahs appeared on the part of the new functionary; and without either question or mercy fell at once upon the boat's crew, passengers, and all who happened to be on shore, belabouring and abusing them, and ordering them to turn out every horse on board. Dr. Ross, who accompanied Mr. Finlay to see the boat off, interfered in behalf of that gentleman's horse, and brought the fellows a little to reason; and an express being sent to the Resident, a messenger was soon despatched to the scene of action, who coolly walked the two disappointed rascals off without further question. Had it not been for the accidental circumstance of an English gentleman being on board, the boat would certainly have been pillaged, and the owners of the horses have lost their property, or have been forced to pay high to get them back. This is Baghdad police and justice!

December 17.—Packets from England have come in with letters and intelligence down to 19th October — none for me of course, for who could expect to catch a drop of quicksilver like myself—here to-day and gone to-morrow, and now only detained by ill-luck: yet I could not refrain from a twinge of disappointment, and something like envy, as I saw others perusing letters from friends while I had nothing. I greedily looked over the lists of deaths, however, and thanked God there was no familiar name among them.

Mr. Finlay has returned; the boat having come-to

at night was left aground by the rapid fall of the river, which at this time of year fluctuates much, even from hour to hour, according to falls of rain in the hills. He will now probably accompany Dr. Ross and myself on our purposed visit to Sook-u-Shiookh and Wassit.

The news from Persia is still vague and contradictory; some say that Hassan Allee Meerza has sent ten thousand men to help his brother of Fars, who is playing King at Ispahan; others, that he has taken his course to Khorasan, and is to set up for himself. It is alleged that the Prince of Mazunderan on being asked by Allee Shah (the Zil-e-Sultan, who is governor of Tehrân,) whether he had any intention of preferring a claim to the throne, replied, "No: that he was old and infirm, with one foot in the grave, and that for him to think of the throne would be folly: all he asked was to be left alone to die quietly in his own province, and that so far as his support went, he had no objection to bestow it on the Zil." We hear not a word of Mahomed Shah and the English party. Mahomed Hossein Meerza of Kermanshah is said to have written to the three aspirants, the Princes of Fars, of Tehrân, and Azerbijân, offering allegiance to each as a measure of precaution: his father, Mahomed Allee Meerza, the bravest of the late King's sons, would not have done so; but he and all the petty princes are keeping quiet in their governments, waiting the result of the struggle between the greater ones.

The roads are by some reports infested every-

where by robbers, others declare them to be all quiet—probably each man speaks as he found them; but there is no doubt that several caravans have been plundered in the neighbourhood of Ispahan, and between that and Shuster and Kermanshah; and that the Lour, Feilee, and Buchtiaree tribes have risen, and gone forth to catch what they can in the troubled waters.

This day we called on the Zobeid Sheikh, from whom I hope to obtain convoy and guidance for at least the outset of our Arab trip. The Aneiza have certainly retired — at least far enough to be no longer objects of immediate dread; and a caravan is preparing to start for Hillah, so that we have every reason to hope that we may now proceed down the Jezeerah in safety. We found the Sheikh in the house of Mahomed Aga, the governor of Hillah; a jolly good-looking fellow he was, fatter than Arab beseems, and far more addicted to good living than Arabs usually are; indeed, the only reason why we had not before waited on this chief was his inability to receive us from the effects of his debauchery. Every night he is the guest of some one in the town, with whom he gets dead drunk, and is consequently seldom able to hold his head up till the succeeding afternoon.

This vice of drunkenness is getting not merely common, but almost universal in Baghdad. In the days of Daood Pashah, it was at least concealed; but now the Pashah himself leads the van in the drunken squad, and is seen scarcely able to walk, returning of an evening from his debauches in the

gardens. The Zobeid Sheikh seems to take very kindly to this sort of life; and, assuredly, his conversation, as interpreted to me, was neither delicate nor even decent. He, however, promised us all manner of assistance and perfect security in his own country, with guides and guards when we should require them to other quarters.

In the evening we rode to Kauzemein, a village about three miles north of Baghdad, where is the mausoleum of Imaum Moossa Kauzim, the Imaum of the Sheahs, who was beheaded, I believe, by Haroon-ul-Rasheed. He was confined in a dungeon, which is still shown, and from whence he is said to have escaped miraculously; others assert that his head was cut off by order of the caliph, yet that he may be seen occasionally to this day seated on his old seat in the dungeon. The mausoleum appears to be a large place, with a couple of fine gilt domes and four handsome minarets; the former gilt by Nader Shah, who appears to have resorted to this mode of decorating the tombs of saints as an expiation for his other enormities. It is a great resort of Persian pilgrims — all those who go to Kerbelah paying their devotions here also; and, like all such places, it is thriving from the outlay made by them, and full of vagabonds and outcasts, who court the protection which, as a religious sanctuary, it extends to such characters. I did not attempt to enter, having seen quite enough of these, and being desirous to avoid the fuss made when strangers seek to visit them.

December 19.—This day we learn that Mahomed

Shah has positively moved from Tabreez on Tehrân with twelve thousand serbauz and twenty thousand irregulars — an exaggeration of numbers no doubt; and that on hearing this, the Prince of Fars has run away from Ispahan to his own country; but we hear nothing as yet of the English or Russian parties, or the share they have taken in the business—yet how interesting all this to us!

LETTER XV.

Arab Tribes of Mesopotamia.—Arab Character and Tastes.—Blood Feuds and Arab Revenge.—The Vale of Women.—Extracts from the Journal of a Traveller.—Toorkomans of the Euphrates.—Ben-i-Saeed Arabs.—Hamet-ul-Khaleel.—The Women ugly.—Ul-Fadhee Arabs of Racca.—Loud Talkers.—Jungle Arabs.—Decamping and Encamping.—Difference between Jungle or Fellah, and Bedooeen Arabs.—The Golden Days of Plunder.—Power of the Sheikhs and their Families.

DECEMBER 22.—We have at length completed our preparations for a trip through the Jezeereh, or Lower Mesopotamia: and as you are now to accompany us through a land inhabited entirely by Arab tribes, you may perhaps be glad to be made somewhat better acquainted with the nature and character of these people, before being personally introduced to them.

You are aware, I presume, that the country of Mesopotamia, that is, the tract lying between the two rivers Tigris and Euphrates, though forming no part of Arabia Proper, is principally occupied by Arab tribes; who, originally tempted, doubtless, by the fertility of the soil so much more productive than their own deserts, have overrun not only the greater part of the country, more immediately in question, but have also taken possession of most of

the low lands on the left bank of the Tigris from the shores of the gulf, even up to Mousul. Thus the upper part of Mesopotamia, or the *Jezeereh*, as it is called by the Arabs, from the river Khabour to the vicinity of Baghdad, is occupied by the Jerboah tribe, of whom frequent mention has been made in the foregoing pages. The Delaim tribe infest the immediate neighbourhood of the city; several tribes, varying in power and respectability, but the dominant and principal one of which is the Zobeid, possess the country from thence to the Skat-ul-Hye, a canal or river which crosses the Jezeereh, connecting the two great rivers. The space from that canal to Kerna, where they meet, is occupied in like manner by many tribes, of whom the Ben-i-Rubbiyeh, relatives of the Montific, are the principal. In fact, all the others are but dependants of these two last-mentioned powerful tribes.

On the right bank of the Euphrates the great tribe of Aneiza, with whom you are already in some measure acquainted, rule the country and oppress or protect, as the case may be, a multitude of smaller tribes, who are found along the river all the way from Beer to Anah. From Hillah to Semavah, the marshy tract formed by the overflow of the Euphrates, including what are called "the Lemloon Marches," is held by the large tribe of Khezail, powerful from the nature of their country, who are agricultural as well as pastoral, living much on the produce of large herds of buffaloes, reared on the rank vegetation of the marshes, and who

are especial savages and faithless plunderers to boot. From Semavah to the sea, the whole country belongs undisputedly to the great tribe of Muntefic, who range upwards, occasionally, as far as Hît and Anah, on the confines of the Aneiza, and who give shelter to a number of dependent petty tribes. All these, excepting the Aneiza, are, nominally at least, subjects of the Pashalic of Baghdad.

On the left bank of the Tigris, above Baghdad, the country is overrun with various small tribes of Koords and Arabs, as you have partly seen, all robbers, who plunder travellers, and commit every kind of depredation. Below Baghdad is found the powerful tribe of Ben-i-Lâm who range the lower parts of Susiana to the Keerkah; and beyond that river the Chaab Arabs have possessed themselves of all to the sea. A glance at the map will enable you to understand the localities of these various tribes.

Now all these petty tribes being descendants of the same stock as their brethren of Arabia Proper, or wherever else the race is to be found, resemble them in all essential points of character. They all lay claim to the virtues of generosity, hospitality, justice, incorruptible integrity, and fidelity to their words or oaths, as well as to the high qualities of courage, independence, and love of freedom; and acknowledging themselves to be plunderers and robbers, obviously attach no discredit to the act of appropriating the property of strangers who may not have bargained with them for the safety of their persons and goods. In fact, like their great

progenitor, their hand is against every man, until, at least, its aid or its forbearance be purchased. They love the roving and pastoral life, moving from place to place, within certain bounds, in search of pasture for their flocks and herds; though, of later years, finding a difficulty in procuring a sufficiency of grain by barter, a portion of each tribe have betaken themselves to agriculture, and cultivate a portion of its land for the behoof of the rest. These *Fellah*, or cultivating Arabs, are, however, held in low estimation by their roving brethren, who despise all such menial employments, as degrading to their free and noble race.

Whatever virtues the Arabs of former times may have possessed, it is to be feared that few have descended to their progeny of these degenerate days, at least in those parts to which Europeans have had access. As the iniquitously acquired knowledge of our first parents opened their eyes to their nakedness, so the perception of his comparative poverty has awakened in the Arab's mind a craving for riches—a feeling which is directly subversive of the practice of either hospitality or generosity; because the easiest way—indeed, the only way—for one of his habits to acquire them, is by force and rapine, by taking the property of others; and, accordingly, the existence of these virtues is found proportionably rare. The same may be said of integrity and fidelity. The man who is unscrupulous as to the means of acquiring riches, will pay little regard to his promises or oaths. Accordingly, nothing is more common than instances

of Arab faithlessness and treachery. The sacred tie of "bread and salt" becomes an empty form which is easily evaded. The pledge given by one chief is disregarded or broken, when it suits his purpose, in the person of his brother or his uncle, who declares his own independence and right of plunder; and we hear even of a host, after entertaining travellers as his guests, and guarding them in safety on their journey to a prescribed point, himself waylaying and stripping them.

Courage, like many other qualities, is the child of circumstances, and flourishes in proportion as these call it forth. The stout resistance of the Ben-i-boo-Allee tribe to the British arms at Raus-ul-Khymah, the determined courage of Arab mercenaries in India on many occasions, and the daring (though often atrocious) exploits of the Wahabees, may serve as proofs, among many others that might be quoted, of Arab gallantry; yet so much is the reverse the case in the countries we are now speaking of, that the cowardly, yet bullying, character of the Arabs is notorious. Of this there are numerous instances. On a certain occasion, when Colonel Taylor was journeying by boat from Bussora to Baghdad, the Arabs of a certain village, on the bank of the Tigris, taking some offence at the conduct of a boatman, assembled in great numbers, and with such hostile demonstrations that, after sundry vain attempts to parley, it was judged necessary to fire a small gun over their heads, with a volley from the party of Sepoys on board the boats. The effect was instantaneous, every man fell down or ran

away, and the women of the village, or camp in the rear, instantly struck the tents and retreated into a swamp behind. The hostile symptoms continuing, and the crowd increasing, a party of Sepoys was landed, on which the Arabs, though greatly superior in numbers, were so intimidated at the preparations made to resist them, that they called out they were willing to treat; and, accordingly, explanations took place, and harmony was restored. The Arabs afterwards confessed that they had taken the Resident's boats for a fleet of native craft, which they were accustomed to bully and fleece at will. In the same way, a friend of ours going down the river, was attacked by the Arabs who demanded an arbitrary custom; but the discharge of a shotted gun over their heads, and the exhibition of a resolute face, brought the party clear off.

A little firmness will almost invariably bring the Arabs of Mesopotamia to reason; but this firmness must be guided by judgment and discretion, or it may lead to painful results. If blood be drawn where the superiority on the part of the opponents is overpowering, the consequences are sure to be fatal; whereas, when resistance in such situations is not offered, the Arabs seldom, if ever, murder. This was exemplified in the case of three Englishmen who were travelling, not many years since, with a caravan from Baghdad to Constantinople. At a point near Mardeen, the caravan was surrounded by a large party of armed Arabs, who demanded a sum of money by way of custom. The

affair would have been speedily arranged by the payment of part of this demand, but these gentlemen, who were a little way apart at the time of the attack, either dreading the result or scorning the idea of submitting to be robbed by Arabs, retired to a little rising ground, where they were speedily surrounded by a well-armed troop. Threats and furious gestures ensued, and in the scuffle, by some unfortunate chance a pistol, discharged by one of the gentlemen, shot the son or relative of the Sheikh. The consequence was an instant assault, and the unfortunate travellers were cut to pieces in a moment.

You have already seen that these battles are almost ridiculously bloodless — a victory is not unfrequently gained without the loss of a man; but it is to be observed that, in addition to the shyness of individuals to expose their persons to hazard, there is a wholesome apprehension of the consequences of a blood feud, which forms a powerful check upon any indiscreet propensity to violence. In the battle with the Ageil, however, this principle did not come into operation, and yet you have seen how comparatively small a loss the Arabs sustained on this occasion, and how little they exposed themselves to danger.

These blood feuds among the Arab tribes, pregnant though they are with atrocities and horrors, differ little in character from those of other nations, including even our own countrymen in the times of old. Volumes of details might be written on the subject; but I dare say you will be satisfied

with one or two instances by way of sample, and there is one which I am tempted to relate, as having occurred within the knowledge and partly in the presence of one of our countrymen.

A branch of the great tribe of Ben-i-Lâm were at feud with another tribe of Arabs, whose name I have forgotten, and much blood had been shed on either side to satiate individual revenge and vindicate the honour of surviving relatives. It happened that an Englishman, travelling through Khuzistan, was received and entertained in the tent of the Sheikh of the latter tribe, his entertainer, the only member of the family at home being a daughter, who acted as hostess in her father's absence. At night, the inmates of the tent, including the stranger, retired to rest; but towards morning he was awakened by shrieks, and distinguished the voice of his young hostess exclaiming that she was murdered! All rushed to the spot, where they found the unfortunate girl in the agonies of death, her breast pierced with three deep stabs of a dagger. While gazing on the dying victim and offering vain assistance, a voice was heard from a height close by, exclaiming: "Yes, it is I! I have done it — praise be to God, I have murdered her!" All eyes were turned to the spot, where there was seen an old woman standing and gesticulating with vehemence. A rush was made towards her, and she either ran or was borne back to the brink of the river on which the tents were pitched, from the high bank of which she fell into the deep stream; and, whether she perished or escaped, was seen no more.

On inquiry, it appeared that this Sheikh, who now had to mourn the loss of a daughter, had once had a son, who in some former fray had been put to death by a *pehlewan* (or champion) of the other tribe; an event which called forth all the virulence of the existing feud. Some short time afterwards, a stranger entered the camp and was received with the customary cordiality of Arab hospitality. Unfortunately he was recognised by some of the tribe as the very pehlewan who had put to death the son of their Sheikh. What was to be done?—He was now their guest, and by all the laws of hospitality and by Arab customs could not be touched. The Sheikh himself was absent; and the arguments of good faith and mercy were preponderating, when the young woman now in question entered the assembly and upbraided the men with cowardice and cold-heartedness towards their chief. "What!" said she, "shall the murderer of your Sheikh's son be in your hands and yet escape? Never let this be said—put him instantly to death, or renounce the name of men!" Still, however, a reluctance to infringe on, in so direct a manner, the laws of host and guest, restrained the hands and weapons of the men, in spite of the wrath that was boiling in their breasts, and possibly the force of that consideration might have prevailed, when the young girl herself, maddened at the sight of her brother's murderer and the idea of his escaping, seized a sword and smote him. The sight of blood was irresistible—in a moment every weapon was drawn, and sheathed in the body of their unfortunate guest—he was literally cut in pieces.

The Sheikh returned, and shocked at the atrocious violation of hospitality, was furious at the perpetrators: fain would he have recalled the act or repaired the injury; but that was impossible. Time passed on, and the murder, like others of the sort, was forgotten by the tribe; but not by the mother of the slain. Resolved upon revenge, she had followed the hostile camp for years, and patiently watched an opportunity, which she found not until the fatal night when the Englishman who relates the story, was by chance a guest in the tent of the Shiekh, and witness to the consummation of her savage vengeance.

The following still more dreadful tale of Arab revenge is taken from some memoranda of Colonel Taylor, respecting the Arab tribes, and refers to a remoter period: — the tribe of Montefic, to whose power I have referred, derive their chief strength originally from two principal clans, the Mâlik and the Ajwad, who, though now united, were once at deadly feud. Their quarrel was for the right of pasturage over certain tracts, and the Mâlik prevailed — the Ajwad were exterminated; excited to desperation by the songs and encouragements of the daughters of their tribe, every male of the Ajwad armed himself for battle, and fell in defence of the spot where his fathers had pastured their flocks. But even this sanguinary triumph was insufficient for the cautious forecast of Suleiman, the leader of the Mâlik; he dreaded future retribution, should even a single individual, especially a male, of the conquered tribe survive. So he adopted the atro-

cious expedient of putting to death every surviving female, and securing the loss of progeny by the most horrible means. This diabolical act was perpetrated. One alone, who had thrown herself at the feet of a Mâlik chief, was saved by his compassion at the risk and almost by the sacrifice of his own life, for he was wounded, and nearly cut to pieces in defending his protégé. Of this young woman, who was pregnant at the time, was born Abdallah, afterwards the founder of a tribe which, from the peculiar origin of its head, received the appellation of "the Orphans' Tribe." The scene of slaughter was one of those pleasant glens which even in the sterile and rocky soil of Arabia are found among the mountains; where water may be everywhere obtained near the surface, and which in spring and early summer are covered with a rich verdure, affording excellent pasturage. It is there the wandering Arab loves to encamp; and so pleasant are those lovely spots, in contrast with the desert around, that no wonder can be excited at any struggles to maintain the right over so delightful a retreat. The valley in question is to be seen some fifteen miles to the south of modern Bussora, and to this day retains the name it received on that fatal occasion, being known as the *Wâdi-ul-nissa*, or the *Vale of Women*.

The following extracts from the journal of a traveller, who resided much among the Arabs of the Euphrates, and which I obtained by the favour of Colonel Taylor, afford some amusing peeps at Arab manners; and I give them with the less scruple

because the traveller himself, I regret to say, is no more;* and I do not hear that there is any likelihood of his journals, if they were preserved, being made public. This gentleman was travelling in the character of a Dervish, with one or two companions, and had arrived at a point near Racca, on the Euphrates, when he fell in at first with a Toorkoman encampment. On reaching the tents, a son of the chief Topal Mustapha, threw himself on the ground before them, and they marched into the tent over his body. "Who are ye, fathers?" was the first question put to them by the chief. "Dervishes, going to Racca, to the tomb of Wasil Karanee — may God be satisfied with the act! — and one of us is a doctor and surgeon," was the reply. No sooner was this said than forward came a crowd of invalids and ailing persons, to whom remedies were given gratis, the only stipulation made being for a guide to take them to the next camp, and an ass to carry their knapsacks. "I will guide you myself," said the chief's son.—"May the feet of all Sheikhs (that is holy men) be on my neck." "Having said so," observes the traveller, "he took medicines for at least six different disorders and remained puzzling about for something yet to ask." The chief wore a countenance of great suspicion, and made many inquiries as to whether they had any money.

A mess of turmoose was given them to eat: this

* His name was Elliot, a very eccentric but very enterprising person, whose life and adventures, if an account of them could be obtained, would form a work full of interest and information.

is made of *itheree*, a sort of millet, coarsely ground and thrown into boiling water, and stirred round till it assumes the consistence of paste. The caldron is then turned over into a wicker-tray, and the contents made into the shape of bread, being baked on heated wood-ashes, or stones, brushwood being heaped and kindled over all. A quarter of an hour suffices for baking the loaf, which is broken to pieces in the wicker-tray, and then placed in a wooden bowl. *Yelaun choorbeh*, a sort of *soup maigre*, is poured upon it, and it is eaten very hot. The master of the tent or his son knelt and fanned the dish with the tail of his shirt, while his guests ate the contents: it is a mess, that from its laxative qualities frequently disagrees with strangers.

This Topal Mustapha, notwithstanding his professions and those of his son, cheated the travellers about the ass, and it was with difficulty they procured a guide towards Racca. The writer considers them as a race more false, thievish, and cruel by far than even the Koords, from whom he appears to have suffered also.

They next reached the precincts of the Ben-i-Saeed tribe, the northernmost Arabs on the Euphrates at Shereen, and were received by Hamet-el-Jassin, the Sheikh of a part of them, with the same religious honours as at the camp of Topal Mustapha, the Sheikh himself throwing himself on the ground on their approach, and remaining prostrate while the supposed Dervishes passed over him. Nay, to increase his satisfaction, Omar, one of our traveller's companions, remained standing on the

poor man's loins while repeating a portion of the Korân. He rose, at length, and saluting each by placing his hand in theirs, invited them into the catacomb in which he lodged. The chief of the tribe, however, was Derweesh-ibu-Fakh-ul-Saeed, a man held in high and universal esteem even by the powerful tribe of Aneiza, who pay respect to few : in fact, our traveller speaks highly of the Beni-Saeed tribe generally, and states that he passed through their territories without suffering any molestation.

One person of this tribe he honours with especial mention, Hamet-ul-Khaleel, or Hamet the Beloved, an old man of striking appearance, whose long white beard waving in all directions, and bald head, half covered only with the black silk handkerchief that bound it, gave a venerable air to his aspect; while "his tall gaunt figure and gallant deportment proclaimed that in his youth he had been that common character, a martial Arab dandy : the hearty welcome and the frequent rounds of right good coffee, declared him to be what in truth he was, a generous, noble-hearted old fellow ; and the term 'a father to the poor,' applied to him by the guide, exactly described his character."

The ladies of the tribe do not come off so well in our traveller's description : he says that the Arab women from Shereen to below Anah are in general tall and very plain, having an awkward and even masculine appearance; the old ones are absolutely hideous. "Unlike their pretty lively neighbours, the Koords, they are grumbling and discontented in the

duties of the tent, and have nothing of that natural elegance which at first sight so much recommends the Bedooeen ladies and the Arab women below Anah: their unbecoming habits, and the rude screeching manner in which they converse, render them very repulsive to a stranger — not one decent-looking woman did I see among the hundreds who go uncovered during the Bairâm in the streets of Anah." The ladies of the Ben-i-Saeed, he adds, go covered with gold and silver coins and trinkets, of which a large thick silver ring, a foot in diameter, having silver rings fixed to it by chains, and a gold and silver belt of five inches broad, were the most conspicuous.

The men, he observes, took the greatest care of their accoutrements. They studded the straps from which they suspend every article, with small round brass bosses, so that they seemed as if covered with armour; their bullet-bags and powder-flasks are lengthened with numerous long thin slips of leather, twisted round with brass at various distances, to give them a glittering appearance, and courie-shells are added according to the wearer's fancy: their dress is a shirt and an abba (Arab cloak); if cold, two abbas. Furs are seldom seen, and not more than one in thirty wears a kind of high shoe — the rest, both horsemen and footmen (*segmaun*) go barefoot. On an expedition of sudden emergency, one and all, horse and foot, rush out in their shirts, tucking the skirts into their belts; and baring their arms by tying the ends of their sleeves over their shoulders, they stream away to the point of attack.

The travellers next arrived at the camp of Mustapha Hajee Mahomed Sheikh of the Ul-Fadhee Arabs at Rakka, and he thus describes their manners in society :—"When we entered, the Sat Koord himself (Allee Sinjar, a person sent from Eyoob Aga, chief of a powerful Koordish tribe, with a dress of honour for the Sheikh of the Ul-Fadhee) was in the place of honour where the Sheikh himself should have been seated. After the first salutation, I said, 'Is this the Sheikh?' and taking from my pocket the letter directed to the Sheikh of the Ul-Fadhee, the Koord put forth his hand, and as no one said to the contrary, I gave it him. He opened and read it, and then addressing me in Turkish, asked the news from Beer. At this moment in came Sheikh Mustapha Hajee Mahomed attired in his robe of honour, made of the worst kind of French cloth. He brought an enormous crowd with him, who all spoke at once; but the Stentorian voice of the Sheikh was heard far above the rest — to my astonishment he even at times addressed persons in another tent. Here things appear different to what they are in other tribes, where everything is settled by the number of adherents a man possesses. They all spoke together, and it seemed to me that the loudest voice carried the argument.

"Whoever first enters the tent, comes to the place, or fixes his eye on where he intends to sit — the signal is 'Salaam Aleicoum!' on which room must be made in that particular spot; the man saluting then wedges himself down into his seat. Each fresh visiter is thus accommodated; even though he had

been sitting in the same tent and at a distance from the fire, he may come with his 'Salaam Aleicoum!' and thus obtain a seat by the fire. This 'Salaam' is never given at the entrance of the tent, but only on the spot which the person fixes on for a seat. There is no respect shown either to age or person, unless it be to those who have the most impudence, and who thus obtain a good seat.

"The Koord, Allee Sinjar, gave the letter to the Sheikh, who, being himself unable to read, sent for the Moollah; he, after much difficulty, read it through. The Sheikh then, turning to me, bawled out in a tone far above the voices of the rest, each individual of whom was at the same time roaring out his opinion and favouring me with directions about my future route. I never before witnessed such a scene of uproar; but it was one I had to witness every day and hour from this to Anah. Five or six persons would ask me questions all at the same moment; and while I was replying to one of them, the rest would, on conjecture, answer their own inquiries, for the purpose, as it seemed, of saying something—the sheer love of talking. 'Talk,' as my companion Dervish Hussein observed, 'is their fire, their clothing, and their pillaw;' and, in fact, the Aneiza had left them little else, coming on them at all times with demands for *itheree*, cattle, clothes, and other things, which they dare not refuse.

"The Sheikh gained the day, however, bellowing out, as I said, at the top of his voice, as follows:—'Beyond the great jungle there are no encampments for two days' journey; and if you sleep out,

you will be eaten up by the wild-beasts—you had better go to the opposite bank of the river: I will give you a letter to a Sheikh under me lower down, where some of my people are going to-morrow—he is carrying over *itheree* on kellicks (rafts). I will also give you letters to the Sheikh of the opposite bank, who will forward you to Deer."

Next came a "row" upon religious subjects with the Moollah, who was called to write the letters; this was going rather against the travellers, when a person addressed the priest as follows, with an arch look:—"I can't read myself," said he, "and therefore cannot judge which of the parties is correct; but this I know, that the paper which you gave last year to a poor fellow to keep the pigs out of his *itheree* while he slept, was worth very little. The man did go to sleep, and when he woke in the morning found half his crop eaten up, and your paper which he had pegged down amongst it, torn, trodden under foot, and defiled by the unclean beasts — so much for *your* being a Moollah!" This closed the Moollah's mouth, and put an end to the debate.

"I was much fatigued," he continues, "by the incessant noise and crushing of people before the fire. A circle three or four deep had been formed, which completely filled up the tent: beyond this many knelt, while others stood up. The Sheikh lay within the circle at full length before the fire; his son, a spoilt monkey of fourteen, sat upon our toes, turning round, and *nudging* us with the point of his fingers (a common practice) as often as he could

frame questions to put to us. The crowd was so great, that when I tried to sit cross-legged, they sat upon my knees, so that to prevent this I was forced to draw them up to my chin and allow myself to be crushed like a wedge. I was much fatigued, and begged Omar to act the physician in my stead. The Koord Allee Sinjar, who retained the placē of honour, and sat raking the ashes with a crooked stick, first thrust forth his great wrist. Omar pronounced his case to be one of the *reeah*, or the 'humours.' 'He is right,' said the Koord,—'that is exactly my complaint;' so Omar gave him a grain of calomel, four of colocynth, and three antibilious pills; but, instead of payment, he received only a request for a similar dose for a friend.

"We had divided our medicines into five grand portions; the first for the *reeah*, or humour; the second for headach, &c. — but the last, which was prolific pills, was in most request, and the next morning the Shiekh's brother seduced Omar away into another tent to exhibit these to his lady, under the tempting promise of a good meal—no small boon; for all had become well acquainted with hunger. One meal in the morning and another at night was our best luck, and we had to carry between us a heavy knapsack. When we arrived at an encampment, we had generally to wait for our suppers till after dark, as Hoosseen said, that we might not see the abominable trash they fed us with. It was always the eternal *itherce turmoose*, with *false* soup, of which, such was its effects upon our stomachs, the more we devoured, the more

we required—unsatisfying to the appetite and distressing in its effect.

"Tempted, then, by the promise of a meal of good food, Omar went to the appointed place at dawn; and when the time came for his starting with the caravan, he found himself literally mobbed, complaints being made that he had taken money and tobacco for medicines which he had not given. Some complained of utter neglect; others wanted to give back the medicines they had received—others to exchange them—others again would not only have their medicines but their money or tobacco returned. The women were the most clamorous of all. To some of these I was forced to give what they wanted; but at length getting hold of the medicine-box, I gave it to a deaf man, who wanted some of its contents, and motioned him to gallop off with it while we should follow as we could. So away we went, the crowd following us, and plucking us back by our *poosts* (skin dresses) for a full musket-shot from the tents. Such were the scenes that occurred every day, whoever of us played the physician. The money we got for our medicines, was generally expended in paying guides, or was pilfered from us; and as for tobacco, my comrade Hoosseen disposed of that; his pipe being seldom empty, to counteract, as he said, the ill effects of the *itheree*."

The next stage of our traveller was to the jungle district, which, from Racca to Ul-Kaim, he found very dense, and in some places impenetrable. The jungle Arabs he describes as the lowest dregs of the human species—"worse than Russian boors,

Bashkirs, or Calmooks"—their manners brutal, their conversation indecent. The women as bad as the men—modesty unknown. At the ferry, the wives of the Sheikh Allee-ul-Kelb and his lieutenant stripped before the travellers, and crossed the river on inflated skins — their whole conduct was equally indecent and disgusting.

As among other wandering tribes, he found that the women were the principal labourers, striking and packing the tents and household stuff, &c. in the following manner:—they first packed up the baggage, then drew up the tent-pegs and threw down the tents: next they rolled up the side and harem screens, made of tall reeds, being only assisted by the men in loading the oxen that carry them. They have only oxen and asses; there are no camels at all in this quarter; and Abd-ul-Arâr, the second Sheikh of this tribe, was the only man who possessed a horse, and a very indifferent one it was—the Aneiza had disposed of all the rest; neither did our traveller observe any poultry—a single cock in the chief's tent served as a clock and a pet for the children. The process of decamping scarcely occupied one hour though there were about three hundred tents, in two divisions, to strike.

On arriving at the new ground, the men commenced cutting down and clearing the wood that covered the spot, making a fence of loose branches, about five feet high. Two openings or more were left, which they call *bab-ul gunnum* (gates for the sheep); spare branches were left to shut up the whole at night, being withdrawn in the morning.

This is done as well to keep out thieves as wild beasts. Lions, in particular, as Allee-ul-Kelb told us, were abundant, and one came to the encampment every night and carried off cattle of some sort. From night till morning the shout went from one tent to another; the dogs are the best guards, for when one of these begins to bark, some of the men of the encampment generally join and shout and hoot till the barking ceases. Even in the midst of conversation in the evening, it constantly occurred that one or other of the party, hearing a growl or a bark, would instantly shout aloud, and this was most frequent in the tent of the Sheikh.

The ground being cleared, each individual takes his station exactly as in the last encampment, in order that the cattle may find their respective homes without difficulty; yet they say that, even were the position of each to be altered, the oxen, sheep, goats, and asses would go to their owner's tent of their own accord without being driven. The tent is then opened out and beaten; the men only drive the pegs and raise the poles, the women set up the screens and finish and arrange the rest. The inside of the tent is then brushed to take off the soot: stakes are driven in, a rope drawn across at the further end, and halters fastened for the oxen; then *itheree* stalks are collected and thrown in, in readiness for the cattle. Then forage is collected, wood cut down, and water drawn by the women. The boys attend the flock, while the men scarcely do anything and are the laziest people on earth. For

six weeks in the year they attend the *cherd* (or machine by which water for irrigation is raised by oxen), there being usually five tents to one cherd, and consequently ten days' labour to the men of each tent. The embankments on which the water-courses run are only three, four, or five feet high, according to the declivity of the soil. Cherds are only required below Racca. They have no ploughs; two men dig with a large spade, one driving it into the ground, after which the other pulls it towards him with a cord a yard long.

"One day," says our traveller, "as I went to the ferry, two men with asses were seen at a distance, on which Allee-ul-Kelb, and five others who were present, ran to see who they were. They brought back the young men stripped, having left them only the patched and rotten garment with which every man travels. Allee then inquired of them to what tribe they belonged, a question they evaded, as it happened that they were of a hostile tribe, which, had it been known, would have caused their being put to death upon the spot. When sent to the tents to be fed, however, they were recognised by Abd-ul-Arâr, the second Sheikh, who, although they were enemies, procured for them the release of their property. The Arabs, in fact, make little distinction between friends and enemies with respect to plunder, robbing both indiscriminately—they even pillage one another in their encampments. One day when a robbery of this sort had occurred, the owner came; and, borrowing a large green byrak, or flag, tied a copper vessel of ablution and a Koran

in a bag to the spear end of it, and, going round the camp, exclaimed aloud: 'O hearers of this cry; O Mahomed and Allee! this is the religion of the flag and of God—the truth is here present—whoever has got my stolen sheep, let him come and restore it.' The theft of a sheep was common, they said—the thieves ate the flesh in secret, and kept the skins for kellicks to cross the river upon. If detected, there is no punishment; but if the sheep were already eaten, the thief was forced to replace it by another of equal value. If a man commits murder, he has only to go and reside at another encampment *of the same tribe*, and is not afterwards molested."

Our traveller, at length, accompanied a person sent by Allee-ul-Kelb to Dair (or Deer), but was forced to pledge his Arabic vocabulary (made, I believe, by himself) to make up the sum required by that Sheikh for guidance, and he crossed the river with great difficulty on an inflated skin impelled by the swimming guide. In quitting the jungle Arabs, he reviles them again for the veriest wretches on earth, and arrant scoundrels to boot, of whom a single shot would frighten hundreds; indeed he mentions a circumstance scarcely worth relating, which occurred to himself, and which corroborates his assertion. Their worst battles and wars terminate, he says, in abuse, or, at most, in a few blows and accidental wounds.

Not so does he talk of the Aneiza, and the tribes of Bedooeen or Desert Arabs. He particularly dwells on the difference in manner and appear-

ance between them and the *fixed* Arabs, such as the jungle and Fellah Arabs; describing the former as naturally noble and gentleman-like, of a manly carriage, and animated features; the latter as clownish in manner, awkward in deportment, and ill-favoured in face and figure. "A stranger," says he, "would scarcely be offended at being plundered by the Bedooeen, while even a compliment from the cultivating Arab is disgusting: I know no better way to express the contrast." Nay, it appears that even in enforcing their demands upon the subject tribes, however absolute they may be, their manner is still dignified and polite; "as if they were taking their own." In short, "the Beddooeens may be termed the nobility and gentry of the Arabs, while the cultivators are the boors of their country." This is indeed the description of an enthusiast in the cause of Arab politeness.

Assuredly, nevertheless, this mode of helping themselves to the goods of their less refined though more industrious neighbours, however politely managed, is a serious evil to the subject country; for we are told, "they (the Aneiza) come in bodies of three or four thousand men, and cut, thresh out, and carry away the corn which others have sowed, and consequently the lands above and below Anah remain uncultivated." Hît and other towns have forts to protect them, and therefore their harvests are more secure.

These are not the only or the most profitable depredations which are practised by the roving Arabs; rich caravans are frequently placed under

heavy contributions, and sometimes fall entirely into their hands, and occasionally large booty is made by surprising parties of rich travellers. Not even the Sultan's and the Pashah's officers escape, when they are overtaken by the Arabs in sufficient force. A friend of mine, journeying near Erbile, met with an Arab who narrated to him, with much glee, several of his plundering adventures. Among others he mentioned his having, in company with a small party, stopped an officer of the celebrated Daood Pashah, by name Yussuff Aga, near a place called Daltowa, and robbed him of a considerable sum in gold and silver. The thing that turned out best for him, was a ring which he took from the finger of one of the plundered party. When he saw it first, the ignorant Arab thought it was a bit of glass set round with other smaller bits, and he took it for the sake of the gold setting alone; but having occasion, some months afterwards, to go to Mousul, he went to the goldsmiths' bazaar to get some coins valued, and there he saw people looking at glass or stones like the one *he* had, and putting a great price upon them; so he thrust his hand in with the ring on it, and asked a jeweller what it was worth. The jeweller took it off, and putting it on his own finger, turned it in all directions; called one or two other persons, who did the same, and then told him it might be worth 8000 piastres. This news, he said, brought his heart to his mouth, but he kept his countenance, and boldly told the other he should not have the ring under 20,000 piastres. They then set to bargaining in earnest,

and at last struck for 10,000. The money was counted down, and when he saw 800 *châmies* (about 80 or 90*l.*) all his own, he got quite confounded, tied up the money in a corner of his camleen, forgot all his other business, went to his khan, mounted his horse, and never halted or stayed till he got to his tent next morning. Even then he could hardly believe his senses, but the sight and *feel* of the hard coin brought him to. "That ring," added he chuckling, "was the making of me,—the best day's work ever I saw! Ah! those were the times! when we wanted money or anything else, we had only to go to the road side and wait for the first caravan!"

As I have observed above, however, these caravans were not always game. On the contrary, it was customary in districts where the Arabs had the sway, to compound for the safety and free passage of these rich marching magazines of merchandise, as in the case of the caravans from Damascus and Aleppo, which have, for many years, been conducted by the Ageil tribe through the Desert to Baghdad. These pay a tribute to the Aneiza for their forbearance, as the caravans pass chiefly through their territory. Yet even this precaution occasionally fails of its object; and caravans, whether from accident or design, are occasionally stopped and even plundered, in spite of their guards. A circumstance of this sort, related by the traveller I have already quoted, affords a curious and interesting proof of the power of the Sheikhs and their family over their tribes. A party of the Aneiza

who had come, in their usual cavalier manner, to supply themselves with grain, from their unfortunate dependents, the tribe of Ul-Fadhee, on their return, fell in with and stopped a large caravan coming from Aleppo to Baghdad, under conduct of a Sheikh of the Ageil, the recognised guides. The result was a negotiation, and the caravan was detained fifteen days in this unpleasant situation, before the question of customs could be settled. In the mean time, though property was to be respected pending the negotiation, certain Jew merchants of the caravan complained that they had lost a tin box of British printed cottons, and the Ageil Sheikh represented this to Abdallah Haddâl, the Sheikh of the Aneiza. A little boy, the son of Abdallah, who was present, heard the complaint and immediately said, "Father, these men say they have lost a tin box; let them find it." This reply of the child decided the fate of the men's property. Though the caravan was surrounded by Abdallah's people, the box was soon found and restored, which certainly would not have been the case had the Sheikh not been moved by his son's words to comply with what, after all, was but adhering to his word.

I do not know whether these somewhat desultory observations, these "shreds and patches" of description and character, may serve to amuse, or afford you any idea of the people among whom I was now to travel. Less independent and unsophisticated than the free tribes of Nejd, the Arabs of Mesopotamia have lost much of the frankness

and generous, which are understood to characterise their nobler brethren; yet in manners and deportment, as little do they approach in gross brutality the Arabs of the jungle, or the oppressed cultivators of the upper banks of the Euphrates; but I need say no more about the matter here, for the account I am about to give you of what I heard and saw among them, will, I hope, enable you to judge for yourself of their character, manners, and customs.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY SAMUEL BENTLEY,
Bangor House, Shoe Lane.

00103175

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 20 February, 2016